The Nation. October 21, 1978 $1

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EDITORIAL

SMITH COMES CALLING

It is hard to tell whether the situation is more perilous in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe or in South-West Africa/Namibia. In any case, the great racial clash in southern Africa, which the conventional diplomacy of the West is doing its poor best to postpone or avert, is sweeping down upon us all with terrifying speed.

Confrontation is the watchword, and the rest of the language of the embattled white minorities and their friends in the West rings with the slogans of the cold war. Speaking of his policy on Namibia, the new Prime Minister of South Africa, P.W. Botha, pledges that "We will fight cruel, godless terrorists. It is a struggle for Christian values and civilized standards." Translated, that means no truck with the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which is recognized by the U.N. as the representative of the Namibian people, and no election impartially supervised by the U.N.

Ian Smith of Rhodesia, the guest here of 27 percent of the Senate of the United States, describes the policy of our government as designed "to impose a Marxist-indoctrinated party-state in Rhodesia," as against the "democracy" he claims his "internal solution" would provide for this country of 230,000 whites and 6.5 million blacks.

Just what did those twenty-seven Senators have in mind when they invited Smith, the outlaw, to visit this country? They could not have failed to know that this quasi-official visit (given the fact that nearly a third of the Senate, seven of them Southern Democrats, signed the invitation) would give Smith's failing cause a big boost. They also knew that their action was a bad blow to the established policy of the United States and Britain, which is to

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STALEMATE IN SCANDINAVIA
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GETTING READY TO STRIKE FIRST
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NO HOME ON THE RANGE
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A. TRILLIN ON C. TRILLIN

VIRTUE IN A VACUUM

THE 'BORN AGAIN' SMORGASBORD

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

Sixteen years ago the founders of Students for a Democratic Society, in a position paper drafted by Tom Hayden, their latterday Jefferson, proclaimed their pain and anger at, and their determination to change, the order of things. Its words evoke an overwhelming sense of *deja vu* from the vantage point of the late 1970s, for much of the talk in that position paper was of apathy and the "subjective sense of powerlessness" felt by most "ordinary people," their "resignation before the enormity of events." SDS linked this subjective apathy to the "objective American situation—the actual structural separation of people from power, from relevant knowledge, from pinnacles of decision-making"—all of which encourages and sustains the subjective malaise. Yes, Hayden declared, we have "democracy" but it is a pitiful, formal thing with the individual pitted against "the system"; we do not have authentic "publics" and therefore no genuine politics. Nothing has changed since 1962 to alter this indictment; indeed, things seem to have become worse. And now we are beginning to see clearly the contours of that malaise because, paradoxically, the tumult, activism and anguish of the war in Vietnam staved off the full harvest of our disaffections and discontents.

One sign that "felt powerlessness" is rampant is the present shrill and cloying celebration of "the self" as the center of God's or somebody's or something's universe—a "self" that is either infinitely expandable, the fluid locus of limitless potentialities; or a "self" that has been

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LETTERS.

MILTON, MILL & COHEN

San Jose, Calif.

Prof. Carl Cohen was given considerable space in your magazine (Letters, Sept. 23] to buttress his argument for complete freedom of speech—particularly as applied to Nazis—by extensive quotations from his 1973 book, *Democracy*. In the course of this he quoted from Milton and from Mill; the latter were accurate, of course, but very partial and to convey the idea that either Milton or Mill was a partisan of Cohen's position is erroneous.

In my own little book, *Democracy, Freedom and Revolution* (1967), after quoting Milton's *Areopagitica*: "And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength." I go on with matter from the same work, very rarely quoted, but vital if one is to get Milton's meaning—as follows (italics added).

> Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they should be, this doubtless is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian: that many may be tolerated rather than compelled. *I mean not tolerated Popery and open superstition which as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpated, provided first that all charitable and compassionate means be used to win and regain the weak and misled; that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or manners no law can possibly permit, that intends not to outlaw itself; but those neighboring differences, are what I speak of.* . . . In the meanwhile, if anyone should write, and *bring his helpful hand to the slow-moving Reformation*, which we labor under, if Truth have spoken to him before others, or but seemed at least to speak, who has so bejesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking license *to do so worthy a deed?*

As for John Stuart Mill, words supporting Professor Cohen's ideas may be culled from him, but those words do not represent the historic Mill. As I also pointed out:

> Mill opposed the secret ballot; he opposed paying Members of Parliament (for only the well-to-do and those of independent means are masters of their own minds): he wanted only taxpayers to vote; an educational test for voting; all recipients of public aid barred from voting: those in "higher" occupations to have a greater number of votes, so that the employer, for example, would have a more numerous suffrage than the worker. Mill favored the limitation of freedom of speech, in terms of what Holmes later called the "clear and present danger," and the examples Mill himself gave demonstrate that the danger that worried him was the danger to private property. Mill was an elitist, expressing contempt for the "collective mediocrity" of the people generally, and tribute to the decisive influence of the "gifted One or Few. . . ."

While *The Nation* has not exactly provided "equal time" for those differing with Professor Cohen, perhaps it will find room for this letter.

Herbert Aptheker

SOMOZA'S CLOUT

Camas, Wash.

In regard to the editorial on "Sandino, Somoza and Carter" [*The Nation*, Sept. 9] it should be pointed out that Carter's administration approved the delivery of several thousand M-16 rifles last year to the Nicaraguan National Guard, and that Nicaragua still gets large subsidies via the U.S.-dominated World Bank and IMF. Also, corporate and financial interests of the United States in Nicaragua cannot help but influence what pro-corporate Jimmy Carter decides with regard to Somoza's dictatorship.

Another consideration of the administration is that there is no social democratic reformer waiting in the wings in Nicaragua to rescue the capitalist system should the *caudillo* be pushed from the scene . . .Somoza has seen to that. Thus, the United States must stick with Somoza in fear of "Castroism."

Somoza has a huge fortune and influential contacts with military brass and Congressmen in the United States. He is undoubtedly. . . leaning on some of these gentlemen to force the Carter people to cease even the minor disapproval they have displayed. . . .

Given all these factors, Somoza's durability and U.S. approval in the face of mass popular opposition in Nicaragua are quite understandable.

Frank W. Goheen

THE ALI ISSUE

Missoula, Mont.

The Nation's letters column for Sept. 9 contained an interesting synopsis of reactions to the previously published editorial by Carey McWilliams, "Muhammad Ali for Congress" [July 22-29]. Two of the reactions were quite critical of McWilliams, one because of Muhammad's stand on women and their place, and the other because of Ali's "slur" against homosexuals.

McWilliams needs no defense from anyone who has supported liberal causes, including the undersigned. His record speaks for itself! Nor for that matter, does Muhammad Ali need defending. If Ali had done nothing in his whole life other than to oppose vigorously our part in the Vietnam fiasco, he'd have done more for the American people than have his critics.

Criticism of liberals because of their "inconsistencies" is one of the curses of our times. It is playing into the hands of reactionaries, almost as if it were planned that way. It is time—indeed it is past time—for myopic partisans who approach issues from only one standpoint such as the Gay Movement or Women's Lib, to wake up!

W.H. Fisher, Prof. of Foundations of Education, University of Montana

Detroit, Mich.

A historical equivalent to Muhammad Ali for Congress would have been Sarah Bernhardt for President of France. The "Divine" one, like the "Greatest," was an explosive personality who spent many years announcing retirement.

Alan Mather

THE PLO FACTOR

Philadelphia, Pa.

Your articles on the Middle East have often brought clarity and refreshment to a difficult problem. But, too frequently, the power and responsibility of the U.S. Government is overlooked while blame is placed only on forces within the Middle East itself. Such is the case in Christopher Hitchens's "Blood Feuds Among the Palestinians" [*The Nation*, Sept. 2] . . . .

While Hitchens seems quite pessimistic, there is a way to strengthen those within the PLO who are willing and ready to negotiate for a peace settlement in the Middle East. The United States should recognize and welcome them by calling for the reconvening of the Geneva Conference under the auspices of the U.N. where all parties to the conflict are represented. As our government continues to deny legitimacy to the only organization which represents the Palestinians, the PLO, it strengthens those within it who see only violence as a solution.

A major concern of peace activists must be to examine our government's role in the Middle East to see if it is, in fact, a peace policy.

Libby Frank, Chair, Middle East Committee, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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EDITORIALS.

(Continued from Front Cover)

include the Patriotic Front of Nkomo and Mugabe in the determination of Rhodesia's future and thus to persuade them to lay down their guerrilla arms. And they surely should have drawn the conclusion that allowing Smith to make propaganda here at this critical moment would stiffen his resistance to a solution that would avoid stepped-up warfare with increased Russo-Cuban participation.

Indeed the invitation to Smith was hailed by official Salisbury as "the biggest diplomatic coup" since Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) in 1965. But the twenty-seven Senators chose to overlook all these serious considerations, offering Smith the right of "free speech" to make his case for his dangerous and unjust cause.

The rationales and rhetoric of the cold war simply won't do as an excuse for the action of the twenty-seven. They cannot seriously believe that their proclaimed "anti-Communist" cause will be served by the intensification and radicalization of racial war in southern Africa, which would follow from a victory by Smith and his policies. At least some of the twenty-seven must be aware, however dimly, of the fact that the Patriotic Front was driven to guerrilla warfare by Smith's resistance to sharing power with the majority—in "the last ditch" from the start.

One must look elsewhere for the Senators' motivation, and one's eye is reluctantly drawn to that darkest corner of the American consciousness, racial prejudice. It was not just the ideas of free speech and fair play that would have impelled Senator Hollings of South Carolina, a generally decent politician, to sign that invitation; it was also his awareness that the benighted part of his constituency would expect that of him and that he must bend to its will. If this taint is there, and if it spreads, as seems likely, the United States will be paralyzed as it faces the ominous confrontations that lie ahead in southern Africa. Sanctions by the international community against South Africa for violating the agreement it made with the U.N. on Namibia are virtually certain. It is inconceivable, morally and practically, that the United States would not support them. What then would the 27 percent try to do—they and their hidden allies who are "ideological" when they are not actually racist?

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Iranian Quagmire

The Shah of Iran has long been America's biggest arms customer—with orders totaling more than $20 billion since 1972—but his latest request could set a record for single munitions purchases. Last August the "King of Kings" asked President Carter to sell Iran some $10 billion worth of new military hardware.

According to industry sources, the Shah's "shopping list" includes: another seventy Grumman F-14 *Tomcat* air-superiority fighters (Iran currently has eighty); 140 more General Dynamics F-16 "NATO" fighters (160 are already on order); thirty-one advanced-model McDonnell Douglas F-4E *Phantom* fighter bombers armed with 1,000 *Shrike* air-to-surface missiles; 150 Lockheed C-130 *Hercules* transport planes; and three Boeing 747 and twelve Boeing 707 aerial tankers. These requests are now being evaluated by White House officials, and a final tabulation will be submitted to Congress.

Administration leaders are likely to argue that we dare not endanger Pahlavi's dynasty by turning down his latest request—even if it means abandoning Mr. Carter's commitment to reduce U.S. arms sales abroad. The public will undoubtedly be reminded of the critical role Iran supposedly plays as guardian of U.S. oil routes to the Persian Gulf—although many experts believe that the Shah's superpower posturing may prove more provocative than stabilizing. But whatever the arguments, Congress should not be stampeded into compromising U.S. security and U.S. morality by providing still more arms to the insatiable tyrant of Tehran.

The particular types of weapons included on the Shah's latest list have ominous implications. We are frequently told that Iran needs its hoard of U.S. weapons to defend itself against a hypothetical Soviet or Soviet-backed Iraqi attack, but the items now requested suggest *offense* rather than defense. The F-4s, F-14s and F-16s, when combined with the fleet of Boeing tankers, would enable the Shah to mount air strikes against targets thousands of miles from Iran's borders. And since each *Hercules* transport can carry ninety-two fully equipped soldiers, the 150 C-130s could carry an invasion force of some 13,800 troops. The aggressive nature of these requests is further indicated by the 1,000 *Shrike* missiles, which are intended to knock out air-defense sites during air assaults deep into enemy territory.

While this arsenal does not seem to reflect the fear of attack ascribed to Tehran by U.S. officials, it does accord with the Shah's stated intention to re-create the "Great Persian Empire of the past," and to establish an Iranian dominion over the Arab oil lands to the south. "Not only do we have national and regional responsibilities," he told *Newsweek*'s Arnaud de Borchgrave in 1973, "but also a world role as guardian and protector of 60% of the world's oil reserves." Since any moves to carry out the Shah's designs would almost inevitably involve conflict with the oil states of the Arabian Peninsula, U.S. interests—including access to Middle Eastern oil—would suffer no matter who came out on top.

The expansion of the Shah's war-making potential should be viewed with even greater concern because of the huge number of U.S. technicians it involves. Researchers for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee estimate that some 25,000 Americans are now employed on military projects in Iran, and that the total could well reach 50,000 by the early 1980s. Since Iran is acquiring modern armaments faster than it can produce skilled technicians to operate and maintain them, it must recruit civilian specialists—sometimes called "white-collar mercenaries"—from abroad.

The implications are obvious: If the Shah does go to war in the near future, American technicians will be drawn into the fighting at the very beginning and, despite their civilian status, will be viewed as combatants by all parties involved. There would be American casualties, and they could trigger full-scale U.S. military involvement in a costly and unnecessary war. (See Klare, "Hoist with Our Own Pahlavi," *The Nation*, January 31, 1976.) And if, on the other hand, Washington ordered U.S. personnel to stay out of the fray, they would, according to a Senate study, "become, in a sense, hostages" of the Shah. Either way, U.S. interests would be severely damaged.

> From the *New Statesman* London; Sept. 29
> *Christopher Hird writes:* During the last few months the Department of Trade has granted export licenses for the export of the following items to Iran: 8,000 anti-riot guns; 26,000 CS gas cartridges; 26,000 CS grenades; 20,000 mini-smoke grenades and 2,000 screening smoke grenades. In addition clearance in principle has been given for 20,000 anti-riot helmets; 20,000 respirators; 20,000 anti-riot shields; 20,000 baton rounds and 5,000 anti-riot guns. Iran has, however, apparently asked for delivery of the following items to be speeded up: 2,000 anti-riot guns; and 250,000 rubber bullets.

Even if the Shah does not go to war with his Arab neighbors, we still stand to lose from continued arms support for the Iranian military. For, along with all the regular military gear, the United States also supplies the police weapons and repression gear (surveillance devices, riot-control munitions, tear gas) used by the Shah to overcome his internal opponents. The Shah's critics have been silenced for the moment by martial law, but no one doubts that the protests will start again as soon as the troops are withdrawn from Iranian streets. The longer we serve as chief arms supplier to Iran, therefore, the closer we are identified with the monarchy and the greater the risk of an anti-U.S. backlash once democratic rule is restored. As noted in the same 1976 Senate study, "Anti-Americanism could become a serious problem in Iran. . .if there were to be a change in the government."

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Even more significant, perhaps, is the violence we do our own moral commitments. Mr. Carter once said that "Our values . . . require us to combat abuses of individual freedom, including those caused by political, social and economic injustice." Surely, there is no more appropriate place for such an effort than Iran, where the Shah has imprisoned an estimated 20,000 political prisoners and where the excesses of SAVAK (the Iranian secret police) are such that Amnesty International places Iran among the worst of present-day human rights offenders.

America has little to gain and very much to lose by continuing to feed the Shah of Iran's appetite for arms. It is high time that Congress uphold its 1976 commitment to block military sales which "would have the effect of arming military dictators who are denying the growth of fundamental rights to their own people" by throwing out the Shah's $10 billion shopping list.

MICHAEL T. KLARE

Michael Klare is director of the Militarism and Disarmament Project of the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C., and author of War Without End: American Planning for the Next Vietnams *(Knopf, 1972).*

Eternal Vigilance

Jean Bethke Elshtain's meditations on the meaning of the current evangelical fervor and the rush into private virtue as a solution for public crises (cover) may be seen as a continuation of last week's special issue on the drift to the Right.

Michael Castleman's report on the Briggs Initiative (p. 403), which would permit school boards to fire homosexuals, may be seen as a follow-up to his earlier reportage on California's Proposition 13.

Robert C. Aldridge's precise rendering of the Navstar program (p. 401) may be seen as the latest, and thus in some ways most troubling, evidence for his thesis ("The Missile Shell Game," May 13) that the Pentagon is pursuing a first-strike strategy.

Karl Meyer and Nicholas Johnson continue the debate they began in *The Nation* of September 30 on whether the Van Deerlin Bill now before the Congress is a giveaway or a breakthrough (p. 406).

These are, in other words, all matters which simply won't go away, which demand regular revisits, and to which we shall doubtless return again and again in the weeks and months ahead.

In this context, we call attention to two episodes which qualify for our running series of atrocity stories involving the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but which don't happen to appear in this issue. First, *Nation* readers may want to consult the October 10, 1978, issue of *Esquire* for Steve Brill's harrowing account of the FBI's attempt to strong-arm him into turning over materials he had gathered in connection with his research on the Teamsters union.

And, second, we reprint herewith, from our morning mail, excerpts from a letter Walter and Miriam Schneir sent to the Deputy Attorney General of the United States; it raises the important question of whether the bureau and the department can be made to adhere to the rule of law.

> The behavior of officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice in processing our Freedom of Information Act request for our files poses an important question that far transcends our personal interests. Can the FBI and Justice Department be made to adhere to the rule of law?
>
> Very briefly, in 1960, a few months after we began to research a prospective book on the Rosenberg-Sobell case (*Invitation to an Inquest*, Doubleday, 1965; Penguin, 1973) the FBI learned of our project and began to investigate all aspects of it and also our personal lives. This investigation, which the Bureau did not even pretend had any statutory purpose or justification . . . involved the participation of a minimum of twenty separate field offices of the FBI. Even after the publication of our study, the investigation continued. On December 23, 1966 the Director of the FBI. . .ordered that, "since both Schneirs prepared *Invitation to an Inquest* the Bureau feels that Walter and Miriam Schneir should be included in Section A of the Reserve Index." Photographs of each of us were then transmitted by the FBI to the Secret Service as individuals potentially dangerous to the President. . . .
>
> The manner in which the FBI and the Justice Department have dealt with our request is a travesty of the Freedom of Information Act. Two examples: An investigative report from the New York office dated 7/14/61 (covering the period 3/31/61 to 6/30/61) contains a heavily censored page 1 and cover pages, a heading on page 2 titled "Activities Concerning Subject's Book. . . ." and a heavily censored page 18. All intervening pages have been withheld. Another New York office report, dated 10/17/61 (covering 6/30/61 to 10/6/61) is also heavily censored and pages 3 through 24 have been withheld.
>
> By chance, a number of instances have come to our attention in which documents in our files that were denied us were released in other FOIA proceedings. The only "secrets" contained in this material were that high level officials of the FBI conspired to abridge our Constitutional rights. . . . .
>
> Our appeal is based on the contentions that there has been no complete search; no complete production of materials; unwarranted exclusions; irrational exemptions; and failure to identify specific exemptions. . . .
>
> Furthermore, we question whether ordinary exemptions apply in a proceeding such as this one in which the FBI's investigation was carried out without any statutory justification whatsoever, i.e., when the investigation itself was illegal from start to finish.

Finally, October 19 is a red-letter day for Harold Clurman (and for *The Nation* by reflected pleasure). On that day the stage lights will come up for the first time at the Harold Clurman Theatre, one of a group of houses in the new theatre center on West Forty-Second Street in New York. Next week's issue will carry a "contribution" to the archives of Clurmania" by Brendan Gill, theatre critic of the *New Yorker* and for many years Harold Clurman's fellow participant at openings on and off Broadway.

CREDIT

Last week's *Nation* should have mentioned that Hillel Levin's article of October 7 on *Information Digest* was made possible by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.

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ARTICLES.

POLARIZED MIDDLE WAY

The Stalemate in Scandinavia

ALAN WOLFE

Hassled to the point of exasperation, Youssarian, the indefatigable anti-hero of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, finally chucks it all and runs away to Sweden. By so doing he acted on a fantasy long held by American liberals. The United States might be militaristic and a hostage to outmoded rapacious capitalists, in short, uncivilized, but there was always an alternative. Scandinavia—clean, pacifistic, moderately Socialist, and humanistic—was a refuge of the mind, a foil to the seamier aspects of life in America.

In reality, of course, Scandinavia was no such thing. Sweden has, to this day, one of the highest per capita military budgets in the world, outdistanced only by the superpowers and Israel. Moreover, any traditional definition of Socialist would have to be stretched far to include Sweden, for its Social Democrats forbade themselves, until the 1970s, from even contemplating the direct government ownership of any major corporation. (Indeed, Sweden has the heaviest concentration of privately owned resources of any country in the world.) Welfare and benefits abound, but nationalization is less practiced in Sweden than even in the United States. Nor were Sweden's neighbors models of decency. Racism is a reality in all of Scandinavia, and social pathologies, especialy alcoholism, defy the eradication attempts of the most determined social planners. Scandinavia had a great image, but it was an image.

Now even that is crumbling. Political turmoil has come to the region, and the consequences are serious. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Finland have been dominated for years by Social Democratic Parties, governing alone or in coalition. These parties tried to find, in Marquis Child's famous term, the "middle way" between capitalism and socialism. Their promise of discovering the best of both worlds worked political miracles, bringing them a degree of consensus and unity that made them, for political scientists, models of political stability. But in the past five years the Social Democratic Parties of these countries have found themselves in trouble, and as a result Scandinavia is at a political impasse not all that different from what has been plaguing the United States and Great Britain.

Alan Wolfe works at the Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California (Berkeley). His most recent publication is The Limits of Legitimacy *(The Free Press).*

In 1976 the Swedish Social Democratic Party, for the first time in forty-four years, was excluded from organizing the government. Once they had absorbed that shock, Scandinavia watchers discovered similar, if less drastic, trends throughout the region. In 1973 Norway's Social Democrats suffered a severe defeat, brought about largely by their support of Norwegian entry into the Common Market, which had been overwhelmingly repudiated in a referendum. Denmark's Social Democrats, who had captured 42.1 percent of the vote in 1960, dropped to 37.4 percent in 1971 and then to 25.7 percent in 1973. Moreover, membership losses were even greater, going down steadily from 259,459 in 1960 to 120,474 in 1974. Only Finland maintained an apparent stability, and that was because of the Finnish tendency to form the broadest possible coalition governments.

These trends generated predictions that Social Democracy had outlived its usefulness, but a comeback of sorts has been experienced since 1973. Sweden's conservative coalition, though elected in part because of its opposition to nuclear power, turned around and sponsored a nuclear power program. In the process, it guaranteed a return of Social Democracy in the next election. The Norwegian and Danish parties reversed their declines in 1977 elections, though neither has regained the strength it had in the early 1960s. Rather than an end to Social Democracy, what we witness in Scandinavia is a stalemate, a situation in which the Left and Right parties in the Parliaments are splitting the seats fifty-fifty. But that in itself is significant, for a region that has prided itself on consensus is now bitterly divided along traditional Left-Right lines. Scandinavian democracies will not collapse, but they seem to have no way to escape from this deadlock. As the world rapidly changes, to move nowhere is to go backward.

The partial eclipse of Social Democracy in Scandinavia has produced an intensification of the extremes. Much publicity has been given in the United States to the activities of the anti-tax, anti-welfare-state right wing in these countries. Norway's Anders Lange, until he died, stirred up discontent with the welfare state; so has Finland's Veikko Vennamo. But the most extensive right-wing reaction occurred in Denmark, where Mogens Glistrup, a successful tax lawyer and a political novice, formed the Progress Party and on his first electoral try in 1973 made it the second largest party in Denmark. In 1975 the Progress Party took 13.6 percent of the popular votes (twenty-four seats in a Parliament of 179), and in 1977 it captured 14.6 percent (twenty-six seats). Rather than proving to be a flash in the pan, Glistrup's Progress Party has held its position as second only to the Social Democrats.

The existence of a flourishing right wing seems an anomaly in a region known for its compassion, yet the Right has had a major effect on Danish politics. "Denmark is the most advanced country economical-

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ly in the world," I was told by Ejvind Larsen, editor of the independent Left daily *Information* during a recent trip to Scandinavia, "and therefore it has the most advanced reaction." This impression was confirmed for me when I interviewed Glistrup, who seems eager to talk to Americans now that the United States is going through its own tax revolt. He is a paunchy man with an uncanny physical resemblance to the late Joseph McCarthy, which led me to wonder over lunch whether there is a physiognomy of demagoguery. But the similarities to McCarthy are physical only, for whereas our most famous demagogue worked himself into a corner, Glistrup seems politically most adept. To succeed, the Danish Right must portray itself as populist, which means it must appeal to the middle class. In this sense its base is dependent on economic growth, for the larger the middle class, the more room it has to operate. Glistrup understands this, and has used the very economic success brought about by Social Democratic policies to establish in the minds of his supporters a symbolic alliance between the very rich and the very poor—both of whom, he suggests, support the welfare state, if for different reasons. One has only to see how Glistrup relates to ordinary people, as I did while accompanying him on a mini-walking tour of Copenhagen, to realize the deep chord he has struck in unhappy middle-class hearts.

The effects of Glistrup's party on Danish politics are more indirect than concrete, as he acknowledges. The existence of his party tempers any programs that governing parties fashion to deal with social issues. Foremost among these are the income tax, which has been held down for fear of further stimulating the growth of the Progress Party, and wages for public-sector employees, which have been allowed to fall behind private-sector wages. Glistrup operates as a kind of anticipatory veto, bulwarking himself against extensions of the welfare state by declaring in advance what he will refuse to accept. Thus, the major parties, determined to keep him out of power, have made him an indirect potentate over their affairs.

Glistrup's shadow lies over all the negotiations taking place on Denmark's next coalition government. The political standoff after the 1977 elections is remarkable, with Left and Right balanced equally. In the complicated maneuvering that was taking place during my visit, most people expected an opening to the Right, a formal alliance between the Social Democratic Party and its historic antagonist, the Venstre Party. (*Venstre* is the Danish word for Left, but the agrarian-based party is conservative by Anglo-American standards.) Such an alliance would acknowledge the New Right's power, for both the Social Democrats and the historical Right are threatened by Glistrup's movement. (In 1977, Glistrup's Progress Party took its twenty-six seats by absorbing 5.5 percent from the Social Democrats, 5.8 from the Venstre, and 6.5 from the Conservative Party, among others.) The question is what price the Social Democrats will have to pay to win Venstre support, and the most likely answer is an incomes policy. Thus, in order to avoid dealing with Glistrup, the Social Democrats are promising wage restraint. Like Callaghan's strategy in Britain, this may buy time, but it is hard to see how it will not at some point alienate the Social Democrats from the unions and their other traditional bases of support. Prime Minister Anker Jorgensen may be able to stay in power for a while, but his long-run future does not look bright.

As the Scandinavian Right has become stronger, so has the Left. The most dramatic example was the 1973 election in Norway, where the Socialist People's Party, far to the Left of the Social Democrats, took 11.2 percent of the vote, compared to its 3.4 in 1969. A similar shift occurred in Denmark, where both the Socialist People's Party, founded in 1958 by former Communist Party Chairman Aksel Larsen, and the Left Socialist Party, a new grouping dominated by veterans of the 1960s student movements, are to the Left of the Social Democrats. In 1973 the Left Socialists took 3.6 percent of the vote and the SPP 6.0, giving them a hold on 10 percent of the electorate. In Norway and Denmark the radical parties have declined since 1973, but their brief turn in the limelight indicates that the Right is not the only avenue of escape from the squeeze facing the Social Democrats. A sign of the times is that it was a Scandinavian country (Iceland in its September elections), and not Italy, that broke the postwar ban on Communist Party participation in bourgeois government.

Like the Right's influence, that of the Left has been indirect. It shows up in the fact that Social Democratic Parties move to the Right when in power and to the Left when in opposition. Thus in all but one of the Scandinavian Social Democratic Parties, recent defeats have strengthened their left-wing factions. Denmark is the exception though even there a new manifesto drafted by the SDP to present to the 1977 party congress emphasized Socialist directions. Despite this document, there is no substantial Left within the Danish SDP. And in my talks with them, neither Gert Petersen, the leader of the Socialist People's Party, nor Sten Folke, a member of Parliament from the Left Socialists, was optimistic that one would emerge. In Denmark, any Left expression must come from splinter parties, and they have not been doing all that well.

The indirect effect of the Left may best be seen in Sweden, where, save for the Communists, there are no significant parties to the Left of the Social Democrats. Nevertheless, the opposition status of Social Democracy in Sweden since 1976, unprecedented in the lives of all the leaders of the party, has encouraged some rethinking of the party's role and may result in a left-wing breakthrough when the Social Democrats come back to power. (In the first week of October, the Conservative Party resigned and called for new elections, thereby setting the stage for the return of the Social Democrats.) To

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understand why this may occur, it is important to examine a bit more closely the history and class composition of Swedish Social Democracy.

Sweden's Social Democratic Party dates back to 1889 and debates within the Marxist movement over the proper road to socialism. From 1897, when it elected its first deputy, until the Great Depression of the 1930s, it grew rapidly. One reason for this success was its close connection from the start with the trade unions, which are organized into a national federation called the Landsorganisation. As the working class grew, so did the Social Democrats; it became as impossible to exclude the party from power as it was to pretend that capitalism did not create a proletariat. After 1932, the Social Democrats were the "natural" governing party because they had the highest concentration of social support within a multiparty system.

As World War II came to an end, the question facing the SDP was how far it would pursue a program based upon Socialist economic principles. The party leaders hoped that rapid postwar economic growth would enable them to expand the Swedish economy, thereby making unnecessary any tampering with the means of production. Gambling on a prosperous future, the party adopted in 1944 a manifesto (written in part by Gunnar Myrdal) that urged an expansion of private investment as the solution to the problem of the welfare state. In this spirit the party adopted what came to be called the Rehn-Meidner reforms, a program that sought indirect economic ways to achieve political goals. For example, if a region were hard hit by unemployment, the Rehn-Meidner program, as an alternative to direct unemployment aid, would offer subsidies to private capital and to workers moving to that region. The Social Democrats would prove, in short, that they could manage the overall affairs of a capitalist society better than the capitalists could.

Implicit in the Rehn-Meidner strategy was the idea that, if a well-integrated capitalism was possible, the SDP could form an unshakable political coalition by uniting diverse parts of the population. Working-class support would be retained, but the middle class would not be alienated. That is exactly what happened—for a while. Employers and company directors, for example, voted 4 percent in favor of the SDP in 1956, but 16 percent in 1973. Given some level of support from small business and a firm alliance with the unions, the Social Democrats could not be beaten as long as the middle class could be attracted. They would be in office as long as the economy continued to expand.

Sweden's economy, however, depended on outside forces. The Social Democrats profited from the U.S.-led postwar capitalist boom. Ironically, Left parties seem to do well enough when the economy steams along, but collapse in a time of economic decline. (If the French Socialist-Communist alliance had come about earlier, it might have won; formed in a period of downturn, it stood no chance.) By the 1970s, Swedish Social Democrats were facing the domestic effects of a contracting world economy. Increasingly, the party was unable to fashion a strategy that would appeal to all classes. One consequence of the party's caution was that, for all the support it picked up from the middle class, it was losing its firm base in the union movement. Industrial workers voted 69 percent for the SDP in 1973, compared to an astonishing 83 percent in 1964. Moreover, those workers who were becoming dissatisfied with the SDP showed a high degree of class consciousness. Richard Scase, an English sociologist who has compared the attitudes of British and Swedish workers, found a significant degree of class resentment and hostility among the Swedish in the mid-1970s. It was evident to Scase that the impatience of the Swedish working class would force the Social Democrats either to the Right (as in Denmark) or to the Left.

In this sense, one of the best things that happened to the Swedish Social Democrats was that they lost the 1976 election. It has given the party a chance to study the crossroads at which it has arrived. By the time of its defeat, some tendencies were already discernible. In effect, the party had begun to repudiate the 1944 Manifesto and the Rehn-Meidner approach to social policy. For example, an Investment Bank bill of 1967 called for more control over banking; co-determination schemes of 1970-71 involved greater worker participation in decision making; job security legislation, introduced in 1974, promised greater state intervention in the labor market; and, to cap it all, the party proposed in 1976 a provision for worker-control over industry by enabling unions to take over gradually the ownership of large capital. Some attribute the electoral defeat of 1976 to the worker-control issue, but since falling out of power the party has not repudiated its support for this controversial legislation. It cannot repudiate it and hold the support of an increasingly militant working class. Thus it is possible—but only possible—that the Swedish SDP may resolve its dilemma by openly becoming a Socialist party. If it does, Sweden will provide the first important test (since Chile) of a parliamentary road to socialism.

I found great hesitancy and uncertainty in Sweden about its political future. There are fears on the Left that the Social Democrats, when they return to power, will once again find a way to "sell out" the working class, and fears on the Right that, if the SDP is serious, capital flight is the only solution. Sweden being Sweden, it is likely that, when change comes, it will be in a nondramatic form that may not register for a few years. Nonetheless, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the crisis facing Social Democracy may be resolved in a leftward direction in Sweden, as it is being resolved in a rightward direction in Denmark.

It would be a serious mistake to generalize from the experiences of Scandinavia to other parts of the world. Yet the success of the anti-welfare state movement in Denmark, the participation of the

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Icelandic Communist Party in a governing coalition, the rejection by the Norwegians of the European road to capitalism, and the possibility of a Left turn in Sweden are as important to the world's political future as are the more dramatic developments in the Communist Parties of Southern Europe. As European countries are increasingly forced by the breakdown of American hegemony to find their own solutions to problems, the way out of the impasse in Scandinavia will become of increasing interest to political movements around the globe. □

DEAD ON TARGET

Navstar's First-Strike Capability

ROBERT C. ALDRIDGE

One of the key components supporting the Pentagon's emerging first-strike strategy is Navstar, a super-precise navigation system whereby missiles can destroy simultaneously all of the enemy's land targets. Other new-generation navigation systems provide 600-foot CEPs (circular error probability: the radius of a circle, centered on the target, in which half the bombs will explode), and are accurate enough for some purposes, but the really hard targets—the concrete and steel missile silos and the underground command posts—require greater precision. And even the 600-foot CEP accuracy assumes that the missile knows exactly the point from which it was launched, which is not always the case when weapons are fired from submarines. Maneuvering warheads will be able to make fine-tune adjustments while re-entering the earth's atmosphere, but to do so they must be sufficiently on course to sense the map area stored digitally in their computers.

That is where Navstar enters the picture. Referred to as the most far-reaching and forward-looking program within the Department of Defense, it is to be a new breed of satellite-based radio navigation. While touted as able to support blind bombing, en route navigation, artillery survey and complex troop operations, it is expected to achieve a 300-foot CEP even without using manuevering warheads. This is the climax of a long evolution.

In 1964 the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) conceived the idea of "direct ranging," called Timation. It operates on the principle that, if we know both the velocity of a radio signal and the time it takes to travel between two points, then we can compute the distance between those points. If one of the points is a missile in flight and the other a navigation satellite whose position is precisely known at any instant, then the distance between the missile and the satellite can be figured. If there are several such satellites, the missile's distance from each can be calculated and, by solving the relevant geometry on a computer, we can determine the exact location of the missile relative to the earth's surface. Going even a step further, by taking these readings at several points in time, we can also establish the trajectory of the warhead relative to the target. Timation would be an invaluable tool for the meticulous placing of warheads.

It is apparent, however, that timing radio waves depends on having a clock that will keep perfect time for long periods in space. The Navy started developing such an instrument and in 1967 NRL launched Timation-1, a satellite carrying a precision quartz crystal oscillator (quartz clock) for testing the concept. That same year the Air Force caught the scent of something brewing and launched a parallel but often conflicting program. One might also remember that this was the year when the Pentagon initiated the strategic exercise study known as Strat-X, a program designed to investigate future weapons ideas that are now turning into first-strike instruments.

NRL set Timation-2, also with a quartz clock, in orbit in 1969. Finally, in May 1973, the Defense Department gathered this fragmented program together into one office; it was nicknamed Navstar. The Air Force by then had muscled its way into the management seat, but the Navy retained responsibility for developing the clock and that, of course, is the real challenge. In December 1973 this newly organized program was approved.

The first Navigation Technology Satellite (NTS-1, formerly called Timation-3 and also manufactured by NRL) was launched in July 1974 with two rubidium vapor clocks aboard. These automatic clocks are ten times more accurate than quartz, but they must still be reset daily to maintain the precision needed for Navstar. NTS-1 has developed a stabilization problem and is now tumbling in space.

The Navstar satellites are to be solar-powered and will continuously transmit navigation signals on two jam-resistant frequencies. Each satellite will be in a 12,500-mile-high circular orbit which will cross the equator at an angle of 63 degrees to circumscribe the earth every twelve hours. All signals will come from the satellites, so the user will not have to reveal his location during clandestine operations. While these signals can be coded to deny benefit to hostile forces, the number of friendly users will be unlimited—they are expected to exceed 25,000, including all four branches of the military services. User equipment will range from sophisticated ships' computers down to 30-pound backpacks.

Eventually there will be twenty-four satellites in

Robert Aldridge, an aerospace engineer, worked sixteen years for Lockheed helping to design Polaris missiles and MIRVs for the submarine-launched Poseidon missile. He is now doing research, writing and lecturing to inform the American people about the first-strike trends in weaponry. His articles on this danger have appeared in The Nation, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists *and other publications.*

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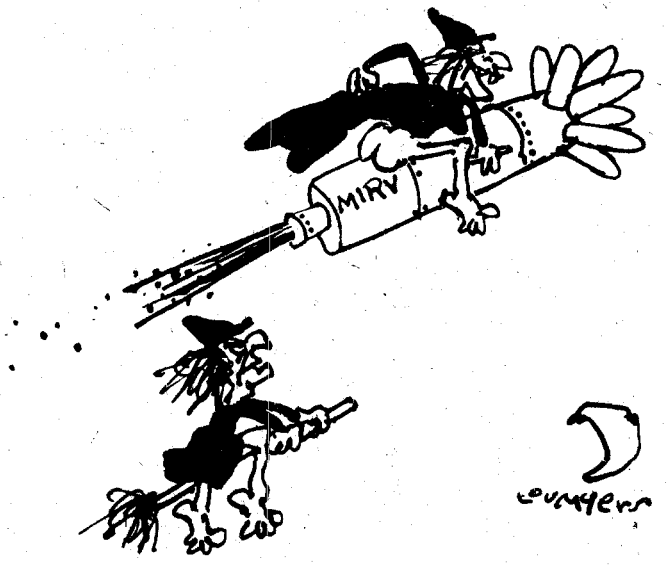
the constellation—eight of them spaced equally in three orbital planes. They will provide positional fixes in three dimensions, as well as velocity and time synchronization for user clocks—the latter being vital for timing radio waves. Navstar will replace existing Transit satellites which are unsuitable for precise weapons delivery because they are only intermittently available and then give only two-dimensional fixes to a much cruder dimension.

Navstar is now in phase 1 of its development plan, which includes testing and demonstrating a six-satellite prototype system through 1980. NTS-2 was launched on June 23, 1977. Also built by NRL, it is the predecessor of five prototype Navstar satellites to be supplied by Rockwell. NTS-2 carried two



cesium beam atomic clocks into orbit, along with two backup quartz clocks. A cesium clock is expected to give ten times the accuracy of rubidium. It can go three to four days, if necessary, without an update, and is the instrument planned for an operational system. The Pentagon has requested $129 million for Navstar activities during fiscal 1979.

Phase 2, a constellation of limited operational capability, will be available in 1981. Consisting of nine to eleven satellites—three to four in each orbital plane—it will provide continuous two-dimensional positioning, with three-dimensional fixes whenever four satellites happen to be in view of the user. This is adequate for normal navigation but is still unsuitable for precise warhead delivery. It is possible that continuous three-dimensional service is not included as part of phase 2 because the precise first-strike missiles will themselves not be available until later. Intermittent three-dimensional service seems to be required, however, because the Navstar program is committed to supporting the Navy's accuracy improvement effort by tracking Trident missiles during test flights. Three-dimensional tracking capability is scheduled to become available over the Atlantic this year, to verify the calibration of Trident-1's stellar inertial guidance package. That same capability will be available over the Pacific in 1979, in time for Trident test missile flights between Vandenberg and the Kwajalein Atoll. Navstar signals will continue to support Trident flights until their development testing is completed, but the actual missile launches will have to be timed to the periods when three-dimensional navigation updates are available.

Phase 3, a full-blown system, will be deployed in 1984, so that it will be in operation when the Trident-2 and MX strategic missiles are deployed. It will comprise twenty-four spacecraft—eight in each of three orbital planes—to provide position fixes within 30 feet in all three dimensions and velocity (speed and direction) within a tenth of a mile per hour. The missiles must lock onto the four optimally located satellites of the seven to ten which will always be in view. This will give the Pentagon's new generation of super-accurate strategic weapons the necessary navigation updates during their flight to plop at least half of their many individually targeted MIRVs within 300 feet of their intended targets. Maneuvering warheads (MARVs) will, of course, correct for the unpredictable atmospheric re-entry disturbances to trim that miss distance to within 90 feet.

The Yuma, Ariz. Army facility is at present the control station and test range for Navstar and will continue as such through phase 2, but the final control facility will be at Fortuna Air Force Station in North Dakota. Construction will start in fiscal year 1980 and the control center will be operational in time to support phase 3.

The Navstar program office is also considering the addition of three earth-synchronous satellites over Europe, to counteract the interference in that intensely jammed area of the world. Those 22,000-mile-high spacecraft would transmit signals 100 times more powerful than those of the regular Navstar vehicles and would, therefore, be much less vulnerable to electronic countermeasures.

Pentagon planners have long-range dreams of what the next-generation Navstar might be. Besides accommodating a space shuttle launch, they will be hardened against nuclear radiation and laser beams. That means, of course, that they will be nuclear-powered because solar arrays would be much too vulnerable. Those new satellites would have close to an eight-year life expectancy, whereas the vehicles currently planned will last five years or less. The cost of this replacement system is estimated at $483 million, or about $20 million per satellite.

The Navy is also looking at a hydrogen maser clock, which is said to be ten to 100 times more stable than even a cesium clock. It is accurate to within one second in thirty-three years at the upper expectation, and would need resetting only every two to three weeks to meet Navstar standards. Size is still a problem—they are difficult to miniaturize—but the Naval Research Lab's NTS-3 spacecraft will carry a hydrogen maser clock when it is launched in 1981.

Despite the military's optimistic ambitions, current Navstar developments have fallen prey to the

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problems common to all weapons systems. In addition to structural cracks, tumbling in space and clocks that stopped during phase 1, the cost predictions for both the limited and full-operation systems have ballooned. The present $1.5 billion estimate for phase 3, for example, is more than twice the original figure. Schedules are another problem—delivery of much of the user equipment is overdue.

However, the costs and the setbacks seem to have no effect on military aspirations to commit genocide with precision. It is obvious, when all the facts are in, that Navstar supports a first-strike policy. Its accuracy is not needed for retaliation under the old policy of mutual deterrence. Moreover, the satellites would still be vulnerable if the "other side" shot first—damaging or jamming twenty-four navigation satellites is an easy job when compared to destroying 1,054 hard ICBM silos. On the other hand, with Navstar fixes the on-board navigation computers of Trident-2 and MX missiles will have the no-miss capability that is needed to disarm the opponent with a surprise attack. Navstar fits snugly into the Pentagon's emerging first-strike strategy. □

SCAPEGOATING THE GAYS

Proposition 6 And The Rights Of Us All

MICHAEL CASTLEMAN

Only last spring state Sen. John Briggs of Orange County, California ran a distant fifth in a five-way race for the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Today, his anti-gay initiative, the Briggs Initiative or Proposition 6, is given a good chance of becoming law. Proposition 6 may very well make John Briggs as recognizable a national figure as Proposition 13 made Howard Jarvis. But if it wins in November, Proposition 6 will do more than confirm the success with which conservative politicians can exploit *social issues*; this particular initiative will go far to restrict the civil liberties of every citizen—gay or straight.

Supporters of the measure—which would permit school boards to fire homosexual teachers or other homosexual employees—argue that what they perceive as an increasing public acceptance of gays threatens the stability of the American family. Biblical injunctions are cited to make the issue a matter of morality and pro-Briggs forces say the measure will prevent homosexuals from appearing as role models before "impressionable" children in the classroom.

Proposition 6 is the nation's first statewide electoral challenge to the civil rights of homosexuals. The breadth of its legal provisions will also be far more sweeping than any previous anti-gay efforts. It will forbid school boards to hire, and require them to fire, any teacher, counselor or school administrator found "guilty" of either "public homosexual activity" or "public homosexual conduct." The initiative defines "activity" as oral or anal intercourse between members of the same sex that is not "discreet" or is "likely to come to the attention of schoolchildren or other school employees." But "public homosexual conduct" applies to all teachers, not just to gay teachers. This term is defined as "advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting private or public homosexual activity."

Opponents of the Briggs Initiative call it a Smith Act and warn that teachers could be fired for merely stating their views on the subject. Taking the language of the initiative to its logical conclusion, a teacher who opposed Proposition 6, or urged others to vote against it, might face dismissal because a school board could interpret such opposition as "encouraging or promoting" homosexuality. Raoul Teilhet, president of the California Federation of Teachers, has said the Briggs Initiative would subject teachers to witch hunts: "Initiative sponsors want to limit the freedom of speech of *all* educators, of any sexual preference. This proposal stifles the voices of those who believe in the right to privacy and to civil liberties. It legislates repression." Union officials also fear that school boards might use Proposition 6 to retaliate against teachers who are active in union affairs.

Meanwhile, Briggs is promoting his initiative with religious fervor: "God said to go forth and bear children. That's what heterosexual people do. I have never known a homosexual family to have children. The only way they can increase their flock is to take from ours."

The Senator inaugurated his initiative campaign after a bill with similar goals which he had sponsored was defeated in the California legislature last spring. Last fall, Briggs campaigned with Anita Bryant in Miami, Fla., supporting her successful drive to repeal the Dade County ordinance that prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. "By the time our campaign for morality is over," Briggs told the *San Francisco Examiner*, "I'll be a very well-known man in this state."

There have been rumors that, if Proposition 6 wins by a margin large enough to persuade him that he has a statewide political base, Briggs might attempt to unseat Democratic Sen. Alan Cranston in 1980. And if recent polls are right, the Briggs Initiative has already gained him a considerable following. A *Los Angeles Times* poll last June showed that voters opposed Proposition 6 by 55 to 35 percent, with 10 percent undecided, but as the campaign geared up in August, the California poll found voters in favor of the initiative by 2 to 1.

Michael Castleman, a San Francisco free-lancer, is writing a book about men's sexuality, to be published by Simon & Schuster.

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Republicans are divided. The Republican California Assembly endorsed the initiative, but the state's Young Republicans voted to oppose it. The Republican gubernatorial candidate, state Atty. Gen. Evelle Younger, who officially neither supports nor opposes Proposition 6, said he thought it unnecessary, since existing laws already require the dismissal of teachers found guilty of moral turpitude, usually defined as immoral conduct toward or in the presence of students.

Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. not only opposes the Briggs Initiative but earlier this year promised to lead the fight against it. So far he has not lived up to that pledge. Although Brown is expected to win reelection, and has been widening his lead on Younger, the Governor apparently believes that by actively opposing Proposition 6 he might lose more votes than he could afford. In addition, the bachelor Governor's own sexual preference has been a subject of rumors since he entered politics, and his recent well-publicized dates with singer Linda Ronstadt have not entirely stilled them.

Most gay activists say the outlook for defeating the Briggs Initiative is bleak. One important gay leader, David B. Goodstein, has already conceded defeat. Goodstein is the wealthy publisher of the nation's only mass-circulation gay newspaper, *The Advocate*, based in San Mateo, a suburb of San Francisco. He editorialized recently: "The bottom line is that it is most unlikely that the Briggs Initiative can be defeated. We shall have waged a good campaign if the ratio is less than the 2-to-1 margin against us that occurred in Miami. We may even lose in San Francisco."

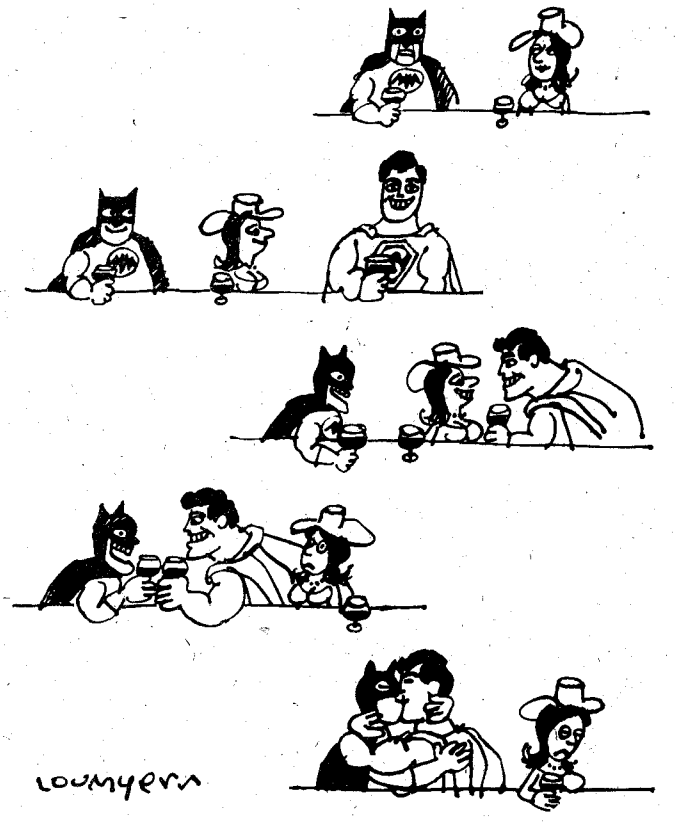
A victory for the initiative in San Francisco would be a blow to gay activism around the country. In the last ten years, the city has become the gayest in the nation; 25 to 30 percent of its voters are estimated to be homosexual. Last July, the annual Gay Pride Parade attracted 250,000 marchers (San Francisco's population is 650,000), and parade organizers called it the largest public gathering of homosexuals in world history. Politicians openly court the "gay vote" and a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors is an avowed homosexual, one of only a handful who hold elective office in the country.

The grim mood among gay activists ~~this autumn~~ contrasts sharply with their buoyant spirits a few years ago. The movement began in the summer of 1969 when the patrons of homosexual bars in Greenwich Village spontaneously fought New York City police who, they charged, had been harassing them. The Stonewall Riots (named for the bar where they began) spurred the establishment of gay rights organizations around the country. Activists quickly built a movement that engineered the passage of anti-discrimination laws in about forty cities by the end of 1977. But the repeal last fall of the Dade County ordinance put a brake on the gays' political momentum. Since Miami, only San Francisco has passed a new gay rights law, whereas three other cities have repealed theirs—Wichita, Kans. by 5 to 1, and St. Paul, Minn. and Eugene, Ore. by 2 to 1. The setback in Eugene was particularly humiliating, for the city is considered the most liberal in the Northwest. More disturbing, however, was the fact that pro-gay forces outspent repeal supporters 3 to 1 and still lost badly.

The pessimism of homosexuals is exacerbated by political divisions among the various organizations working to defeat the Briggs Initiative. David Goodstein favors a low-key, professional campaign with mass-media appearances by heterosexual mothers, police and clergy who would speak out in support of gay civil rights. But Rev. Troy Perry, head of the homosexual 20,000-member Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles thinks gays should spearhead a more active campaign. "Blacks," he said, "didn't make their gains by keeping a low profile."

Meanwhile, Left-oriented groups like the Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative are organizing a grass-roots campaign, with homosexuals staffing tables at supermarkets and shopping centers. Goodstein has criticized the leftists for being too flamboyant. They have called him elitist.

The disarray of the anti-Briggs forces has



generated some adverse publicity, and attempts are being made to reconcile various factions—at least publicly. But it remains to be seen whether a more unified effort can significantly affect the outcome on November 7.

Immediately after the Briggs Initiative was placed on the ballot, Gay Rights Advocates, a public

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interest law firm in San Francisco, sued to have it removed as unconstitutional under the First and Fourteenth Amendments. But that suit and others similar to it were dismissed. Donald Solomon, an attorney with Gay Rights Advocates, said that California courts have always been reluctant to remove initiatives from the ballot. Since 1911, when California adopted the initiative process, the courts have removed only one of them from the ballot before Election Day.

"The initiative is an enshrined right of the people," Solomon said. "The courts go out of their way to let the people vote on initiatives, even if they are likely to be declared unconstitutional later, which is almost certainly the case with Briggs." If the Briggs Initiative passes, Gay Rights Advocates plan to challenge it in court on constitutional grounds.

In recent years, the New Right has won significant political victories by organizing around issues involving sexual politics. The appeal is not to voters' pocketbooks, the traditional conservative approach, but to their moral outrage at what conservatives call "the disintegration of the American family." According to Donald Sizemore, Briggs's administrative assistant, "You can see the demise of the family in societies that encourage homosexuality—like Rome."

For the last year, *The Advocate* has been documenting ties between anti-gay groups and The Conservative Caucus. TCC is attempting to use "protect the family" to score gains in state and Congressional elections in 1980. Many liberals would agree that the family has become less central to the American way of life in recent years, but the reasons for this change are as numerous as they are complex and interdependent. They include: the increased use of contraception, the falling birth rate, the soaring divorce rate, the women's movement, disenchantment with traditional religion, inflation and the increased pressure on wives to work to maintain a middle-class standard of living. Even the rise of fast-food chains plays a part.

The New Right, however, has persuaded many voters that the way to protect the ravaged family is to scapegoat the ERA, abortion and now homosexuals. "One of the most fundamental interests of the State," the preamble to the Briggs Initiative says, "is the preservation of the family. [It] is the State's duty to protect its impressionable youth from influences which are antithetical to this vital interest." Senator Briggs summed up the argument in favor of his initiative this way: "It makes a lot of people upset when homosexuals play role model in front of our children."

The most compelling evidence against the "role model" theory is the fact that, since for generations homosexuality has been grounds for dismissing a teacher, those who were gay tended to be extremely private about their sexuality. Many gay teachers have even resorted to heterosexual "show dates" to obscure their homosexuality. Accordingly, there are millions of gays throughout the country who never knowingly encountered a homosexual teacher in school. A politically conservative man who graduated from high school in 1949 said he had fifty teachers in public school, none of whom was openly gay. "If, as Briggs contends, public school instructors present role models that are ultimately emulated, I would not be gay today." And a lesbian who attended Catholic schools from first grade through college said, "If teachers were role models for sexual preference, I'd be celibate."

Gay activists say that the role model issue is a smoke screen to cover fears that gay teachers are child molesters. They compare the Briggs Initiative to the busing controversy where the cry, "protect the neighborhood school," was often a smoke screen for racism.

Every study of child sexual abuse demonstrates that it is overwhelmingly a heterosexual problem, largely confined within the family. The typical victim is a 9-year-old girl; the typical molester is her father, stepfather, uncle or a family friend. In San Francisco, the gay mecca that Senator Briggs called "a moral garbage dump," police documented 107 cases of child sexual abuse in 1972—*not one* by a homosexual.

Barbara Holman, president of the San Francisco PTA, whose five sons have had several homosexual teachers, said she has never heard of a case where a gay school employee sexually molested a student. "We have a lot more trouble with male heterosexual teachers fondling little girls."

What would happen if the Briggs Initiative passed? Obviously homosexual and heterosexual teachers who supported gay rights could find their jobs in serious jeopardy. That could lead to the biggest anti-gay witch hunt since 5,000 homosexual federal government employees were dismissed in the early 1950s as part of Sen. Joseph McCarthy's attacks on Communists and "sexual perverts." But many civil liberties attorneys believe the Briggs Initiative would be declared unconstitutional, and recently some courts have seemed more kindly disposed to gay rights than the voters have been. Last spring, for example, a judge in Des Moines, Iowa ordered the reinstatement of two lesbian teachers who had been fired for holding hands and embracing.

Whether or not the Briggs Initiative is eventually declared unconstitutional, many homosexuals have expressed concern that its passage might set off a wave of physical assaults by "queer-bashers." Such attacks have long been a problem in the gay community, and last year in San Francisco, a homosexual gardener was brutally stabbed to death by a gang of teen-age toughs.

Of course, it is by no means certain that passage of the Briggs Initiative would lead to outbreaks of anti-gay violence—reports indicate that this has not occurred in Dade County. But one result would be unavoidable: the day-to-day bigotry homosexuals encounter would become grounded in the law. And when the law requires discrimination against one group in a heterogeneous society, can any other group remain certain of its safety? □

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VAN DEERLIN, ROUND 2

Johnson and Meyer Continue Their TV Dispute

NICHOLAS JOHNSON

Karl Meyer and I have had our debate, and rebuttal, over the proposed new Communications Act (*The Nation*, September 30). I'm prepared to refer readers to that exchange, and stand by it. Mr. Meyer wants another round. Can't say as I blame him. It really was his burden to make the case for this bill. He couldn't do it. In fact, he hasn't even addressed the fundamentals with which I opened.

We haven't seen each other's further statements in this issue. For all I know he's saved his only valid arguments for last. But I doubt it. Failing that miracle, it seemed most appropriate to summarize the case.

Reps. Lionel Van Deerlin and Louis Frey, and advocate Karl Meyer believe that radio and television should not be subject to public accountability—neither directly (through currently existing public legal rights) nor indirectly (through FCC regulation). They would give stations licenses in perpetuity, and repeal virtually all public rights (including FCC enforcement of equal employment opportunity for minorities and women).

They argue that (*1*) abolishing government regulation is a good in its own right; (*2*) government regulation of broadcasting has been at best ineffective and at worst a First Amendment threat; (*3*) the "marketplace" will serve adequately any legitimate "public interest" in broadcasting, and (*4*) fees to be paid by broadcasters will more than make up for lost public rights.

Opponents of the Van Deerlin Bill (H.R. 13015) argue that the bill is, at best, an ill-considered, naive, balancing act involving the most politically powerful vested interests. At worst it is a fraudulent, virtually secret giveaway of public rights essential to the functioning of our democratic society.

For fifty years Presidents, Supreme Court Justices, Senators and Members of Congress, academics, members of the audience, and even some broadcasters, have urged that broadcasting carries special obligations and responsibilities. They have been joined in this view by their counterparts around the world.

Those of us who oppose the Van Deerlin Bill side with that half-century of human judgment. We do not argue that the 1934 Communications Act cannot be improved. It can. We have endorsed the Ottinger Bill (H.R. 11951) to that end. We do not argue that the FCC's regulation cannot be made less onerous. It can. We do not oppose innovation in broadcast regulation. We encourage it. We do not oppose marketplace mechanisms where they work. We have argued *for* fewer restraints on cable and pay broadcasting (over broadcasters' successful opposition).

We answer the proponents' four arguments by saying (*1*) government regulation is neither good nor ill in its own right. It depends on why and how it is done. (*2*) However ineffective the FCC has been, it has many commendable decisions to its credit. Moreover, the existence of a regulatory scheme has given pause to irresponsible broadcasters and power to the concerned public in negotiating its own settlements with them. Genuine First Amendment threats from the FCC are few, and easily redressed by the courts. Without regulation, threats by broadcasters to the *public's* First Amendment rights (which the Supreme Court has said are "paramount") are seriously jeopardized. (*3*) There is no "marketplace" in broadcasting. Congress and broadcasters oppose creating one. Even if it existed it wouldn't be adequate to provide programming diversity. (*4*) The proposed "fees" are so grossly inadequate as to be either laughable or fraudulent.

Any *one* of the following would be grounds for some regulation of broadcasting: (*1*) its creation and protection from competition by government; (*2*) the monopoly status each broadcaster enjoys on the occupied frequency; (*3*) its pervasive presence in our lives; (*4*) the limited number of available frequencies, and (*5*) its impact upon the values and functioning of a democratic society—in politics and government, education, religion, economics, art and culture, the perception of the elderly, minorities, women and a thousand other ways.

Not just one, but *all* are present here.

Nonetheless, the arguments of Meyer and the broadcasters are being heard by Van Deerlin and others in Congress. The public has not even been informed, let alone heard from. The threat is real.

We need to hear from you if this outrageous bill is not to become law. Please write: National Citizens Communications Lobby, 1028 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D.C. 20036. □

Nicholas Johnson, who chairs the National Citizens Communications Lobby in Washington, served as an FCC Commissioner from 1966 to 1973.

KARL E. MEYER

On rereading my exchange with Nicholas Johnson on the merits, or lack of them, of the Van Deerlin Bill, I felt we were firing compressed pellets at very different targets. Since the matter is of importance, I ask indulgence for this attempt to raise the sights by restating what I believe to be at issue.

Karl Meyer is television critic for the Saturday Review.

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What really divides us is the definition of progress in television programming. My criterion is prime time. When I turn on the tube, I see the same vast wasteland that Newton Minow memorably deplored in 1961—a mindless procession of kiddie sitcoms, jiggly shows and "action" dramas, interspersed with interminable commercials. Only on occasion do we get anything superior on the networks, and even the recent modest gains in adult comedy (as in the Norman Lear and MTM programs) seem in jeopardy.

It was entirely typical that not one of the three networks was willing to take up Joseph Papp and Norman Lear on their proposal last year to produce a weekly series of American dramas. Without public television, whatever its inadequacies, most viewers would lack any alternative to the prepackaged *dreck* that engulfs us.

Nicholas Johnson, by contrast, places high value on citizen-broadcaster agreements made possible by the present system of FCC licensing of TV and radio stations. I would not deny that these agreements have yielded some benefits in terms of equal employment, public service announcements, etc. However, too often these agreements are token concessions that enable broadcasters to justify their outpouring of prime-time drivel. Furthermore, when they threaten stations with costly challenges, citizen groups are employing a weapon that any organized minority can use to chill controversy and impose its taste on all of us.

I am prepared to accept that the Van Deerlin proposal is imperfect. As Johnson argues, the license fees it contemplates may not be high enough for adequate financing of public broadcasting. Let us, then, urge higher fees. It also may be, as Martin Mayer maintains, that the proposed deregulation of cable TV is risky, and that instead of abandoning TV licensing, the term should be extended from three to twenty years. (Mayer's temperate appraisal of Van Deerlin appears in the October issue of *American Film*, along with a reflective interview on Van Deerlin with FCC Chairman Charles Ferris.)

But Nicholas Johnson is not analyzing, he is castigating. I cannot accept his premise that the existing system has worked, or can be made to work. And some of his statements warrant these Parthian pellets:

(*1*) True enough, when Johnson was a commissioner the FCC did impose a token tax on broadcasters, but the amount involved was peanuts. Between 1970 and 1975, a grand total of $31.9 million was collected from broadcasters—but the fee was ruled to be illegal by the courts, and the FCC has been ordered to return all moneys collected (see *Broadcasting*, May 23, 1977).

(*2*) True enough, and to his credit Johnson did challenge the introduction of "family viewing hour," as concocted by the FCC in collaboration with the National Association of Broadcasters. But as much as the merits, what exercised citizen groups was the fact that they had been left out of policy formulation (see Cole and Oettinger, *Reluctant Regulators*, pp. 276-288). I wish that Johnson would address himself forthrightly to the censorship implications of organized boycott threats against sponsors of such shows as *Charlie's Angels*—tactics reminiscent of the blacklisting era. I do not mean to impute to Johnson the narrow-mindedness of some of his allies in the assault on Van Deerlin. But he might recall the sentiment attributed to the Duke of Wellington during the Peninsular campaign: "I don't know if my troops will scare the enemy, but they sure as hell scare me." □

Smorgasbord

(Continued from Front Cover)

"born-again" and renewed in spirit; or a "self" that has taken the route to peace of mind via any of dozens of bewildering alternatives—TM, TA, encounter therapy, sensitivity training, behavior modification, a smorgasbord of get well, happy, placid, successful, sexy, self-assertive, unhung-up, turned-on, true to one's me-centered movements.

The most potent and widespread phenomenon of this new spirituality is the epidemic of evangelicalism or charismatic Christianity sweeping the country. To be "born again" is to acquire an all-inclusive *identity*, both public and private, which carries with it, or trails in its wake, a prima facie presumption of virtue, of private goodness. Every activity undertaken by the born again, including those of a public or quasi-public nature, is suffused with a divine aura. Born-again athletes pray before, during and after physical combat and God's will enters into the win-loss column. For those born again, public institutions must be transformed into a vast conglomerate of "means" designed to promote the ends of Christian virtue, thus welding public and private identities and purposes into one enormous, sacrosanct, holy thing. Political action, from this vantage point, does not have public or social aims per se; its aim is to remove wickedness or to promote goodness through the public arena.

Although the current evangelical fervor is remarkable for its scope and depth, academic students of current affairs have by and large ignored it, save for occasional sophisticated jokes about President Carter and his faith healing sister. (Sheldon Wolin's two-part series on the Carter Presidency in the *New York Review of Books*, "Carter and the New Constitution" [Part 1, May 18; Part 2, June 1] is a much welcome exception.) Perhaps the insouciance

This article is an adaptation from one section of a paper, "Persons, Politics, and Moral Conflict," delivered by Jean Bethke Elshtain at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York, August 31-September 3. Ms. Elshtain is associate professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

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stems from a mistaken notion that born-againism is a short-lived phenomenon confined to the Bible Belt and certain sections of Southern California, and that those drawn into its vortex are mostly lower-middle-class and uneducated persons, with women being particularly susceptible subjects. This impression offers a bit of snob-appeal solace, but it is incorrect and fails entirely to clarify what is happening to so many Americans, and why, and what that bodes for all of us in the days and years ahead. When nearly half the American population claims that a life of virtue cannot be a civic life, that politics neither offers a secure sense of identity, nor serves as a source of pride and meaning—when the noble term "citizen" has become a kind of bitter joke, unessential to one's understanding of oneself—we must all tremble at the implications.

If the fact that I am an American citizen has lost its meaning for me, I shall seek meaning elsewhere. A relatively stable identity seems to be a universal human need. For tens of thousands of Americans, an all-encompassing identity has been found in a personal salvation that nevertheless connects them, in ways sometimes intimate, sometimes occasional and abstract, to a larger social (but not political) network. Prayer groups, devotional societies, charismatic rallies, and mass gatherings of the faithful abound. St. Thomas, a figure whose Christianity is much too cool and reasoned for the new "hot" evangelicals, argued that the life of virtue must be a shared life. But the shared life to which he referred was that made possible by living out one's span within a settled community, one structured and permeated by a dense tangle of custom, tradition and ritual. This way of life was the locus of its participants' social identity. But to the thousands of freshly saved in our day, to be "born again" is a concept taken quite literally: one becomes as a pre-Freudian child, a child whose innocence is bountiful, whose freedom is limitless, and who lacks all guile. Like children (or adult fantasies about what children are like), or Adam and Eve before the fall, they are nonhierarchical, anti-authority, anti-institutions, anti-rules. To achieve a life of virtue one need only accept and proclaim a few simple truths that one "feels" in a kind of indescribable "ecstasy." The more traditional Christian would argue that this mixture of pop mysticism, Pollyannaism and fundamentalism is no basis on which to build viable communities for the faithful, or anybody else. Communities require rules, structures, procedures, institutions, prohibitions, injunctions and duties. Ineffability and spontaneity hardly provide the sure and secure center for an ongoing identity, whether private or shared. Ecstasy is a fickle thing, readily manipulated, stoked up and corrupted by the unscrupulous, who invariably prey upon the determinedly innocent and the willfully childlike.

The rush into private virtue (or what passes for such) as a solution for one's crisis of public and private identity has engaged, according to both NBC and Gallup Polls, fully a third of adult and teen-age Americans. Some 71 percent of the saved youth claim that they, in turn, have personally "tried to encourage someone to accept Jesus Christ." (The term "encourage" may fetch a smile from someone who, like myself, has been approached by a pair of youthful evangelicals intent upon saving my eternal soul.) The Campus Crusade for Christ, an organization that during the 1960s folded or dwindled to a hard-core few on many campuses, can now proclaim its motto, "Today the campuses. Tomorrow the world," with a swelling tide to support the boast. Jews for Jesus grow in numbers and proselytizing zeal. An additional 2 million adult Americans claim that they are "deeply into" Eastern religions. To them one might add, although these are more ambiguous cases of the phenomenon, 6 million meditators and 5 million practitioners of yoga. Charismatic rallies routinely draw audiences of 50,000 or more. (May one seek comfort from the fact that these rallies, though of awesome size, are free to all comers, and that the recent Rolling Stones concerts throughout the United States—which were free to no one—could gather in 90,000-plus of the paying faithful in less than six hours of ticket selling? "Sympathy for the Devil" seems not to have lost its appeal, but then the Stones represent not so much an alternative to charismatic evangelicalism as its darker, more diabolical image. One does, however, grow weary of interminable "niceness" and the Stones are at least not very nice.) The weight of this amassed evidence—and more—prompts the ever cautious George Gallup himself to state that the United States may well be in "an early stage of profound religious revival."

If more proof of its pervasiveness is required, the born-again fever has permeated sober ranks of corporate executives. *New York* magazine, a slick weekly that tries to cater to the preferences, whimsies and titillations of urban sophisticates, ran an article, "Born Again in New York" [May 22] on New York's well-placed born-again business moguls, and determined that their numbers had increased by 500 to 600 percent in less than two years. The article described weekly prayer breakfasts for top-echelon officers, held convenient to their Wall Street work places. The discriminating faithful could purchase diamond-studded "Try God" pins at Tiffany's, whose Chairman of the Board is a born-again Christian of long standing. Born-again executives have little in common with their spiritual brothers among New York Cops for Christ, but share with them the conviction that Christianity is no more than a few simple truths erected on the rock of a primitive and unquestioning faith that answers all questions and leaves no stone unturned. Inner peace is achieved by eliminating all ambiguities and hence all potential moral conflicts. In this bare-bones version, stripped of all history, all the accretions of moral and social struggle, pathos and courage, Christianity becomes fully compatible with the possession and manipulation of wealth. Indeed, some

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born-again executives claim that their faith has increased their prosperity by easing their stress, thus enabling them to carry onward and upward in the pursuit of profit. (Perhaps some latterday Tawney is assessing this phenomenon at length, to offer us one day, *Christianity and the Maintenance of Corporate Capitalism in its Monopoly Phase.*)

Jacob Needleman, surveying the spiritualistic scene, stated in an interview with *The New York Times* [June 22, 1977] that these new religious movements, in their broadest sense, could "no longer be taken as a transitory cultural aberration but rather as a central feature of the profound change through which the American civilization is now passing." I am inclined to accept Professor Needleman's judgment even as I puzzle over it. What is this "profound change"? Is the resurgence of religiosity symptomatic of that change, or are these manifestations themselves part of the profound change? Perhaps one needn't opt for one view or the other; both may well be correct. One need only recall the demoralization of the Nixon years, the hideousness of the war in Vietnam, the aftermath of the civil rights and various "liberation" movements, the broken promises of the culture of work, and the fact that for years none of us has heard a political speech that sounded human, to account for the profound change and its discontents.

Although I have concentrated thus far upon the nature and numbers of born-again evangelicals, other roads to peace of mind abound. Their availability is evident from the advertisements placed by purveyors of the virtuous "self" in one's local paper. For example, transcendence is a non-Christian option to our griefs and torments which, like born-again Christianity, claims for its adherents a kind of automatic incorporation into the ranks of the virtuous. (Claims to virtue must be evaluated. For genuine virtue to exist, even as a possibility, moral conflict, hence the requirement that a person *choose* the virtuous way, must be present. And having chosen, one must be prepared to subject one's choice to public scrutiny and debate. If claims to virtue cannot be made and defended publicly, before an audience of reasonable persons, they remain stuck in a purely private subjectivism, a relativistic solipsism.)

I read recently a paean to transcendence, with personal meaning and identity wafting aloft on the balloons of spontaneity, fulfillment, authenticity, cosmic harmony and being "real." In a journal that calls itself *New Directions* (put out by an organization that specializes in the publication of "Lifestyle Magazines") an event characterized as the World Symposium on Humanity was described and celebrated. The keynote speaker at this "celebration" was Theodore Roszak, whom some of us remember from an earlier time as a celebrant of the counter-culture movement of the 1960s and a supporter of altered consciousness. Mr. Roszak offered the assembled faithful a "Manifesto of the Person," which he declared to have been "spontaneously composed." (Whether such spontaneous composition is akin to the divine authorship claimed for scripture or the epistolary equivalent of speaking in tongues, I

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cannot say.) Roszak's manifesto promises his new persons an escape from politics, indeed from all public institutions, hierarchies, law, finally from history itself. "Yes . . . you know," he declaims, "with an almost instinctive force, that there is an authentic *you* somewhere inside behind all the imposed identities; a *you* that needs a meaning of your own making. . . ." Man must make himself, and the passwords and bywords are "personal fulfillment," a "politics of the person" which "has yet to be invented" and an utter repudiation of "prefabricated identities," or all that one was or thought one was, all that links one to the past and ties one to the present. History, whether of self or society, is incompatible with becoming a transcendent person or inventing a new politics. The new politics, Roszak continues, will be a politics of therapy aimed at rooting out the "poison" of the old, at eliminating all guilt and other notions linked with the past. Only then, in a *societas perfecta* of the guilt-free and history-less, can the new person soar to a pinnacle of previously "unrealized energies of self-transcendence. . . ."

The person, or new personhood itself, will become the all-absorbing focal point of devotion and identity. Without politics, or contemplative thought, or others, or that "collective fiction" called "society," man will worship at the altar of himself as a "new and higher object of allegiance." This used to be called idolatry, but that concept, too, is part of the "poison" of the old. The collective identity of a people grounded in a shared historic experience, or forged from their mutual involvement in determinate activities and relations that are rule-governed and aimed at the attainment of both public and private ideals, is ruled out in favor of a prefabricated abstraction: Personhood. The new persons, having rejected any distinctions between, say, a nation, a polity, a constitution, a way of life and a society by collapsing all the structures of our public identity into the epithet "system"—a code word for all that is bureaucratic, cold, impersonal and evil—go on to reject a collective identity. (It is ironic how frequently those on the yellow brick road to transcendence tread simultaneously the pathways of "technologese" or social science jargon, which likes to speak of systems and inputs and feedback, as if a polity were the body politic conceived as a computer or robot.) Sheldon Wolin's question: "What does it mean to be a citizen of a system?" answers itself: it means nothing; it *is* no-thing. Thus the devotees of the new person, having first theorized the life out of the world and then condemned its lifelessness, go on to embrace their new politics.

The old politics was a monster of power, "colossalism" and selfishness, a giant run amok which could not be tamed by any political processes known to us. One must forge a new politics. But what do aficionados of self understand by public, or the political community, or the social good? It turns out that their "politics" is as boundless as their amoeba theory of the individual: The new politics will forge a link between the transcendent person and nothing less than the cosmos. One's most intimate political tie will be to the "planet" itself. Thus a mystic ellipse, with Planet on top, Person on the bottom, and Relationship in between is touted as a "distinctive contemporary discovery." Perhaps so. But it could also be seen as a kind of slatternly, secularized version of that terrifying, awful, loving nexus *a deux* between God and Man of the Protestant reformers. The old God proffered justice, mercy and grace. One wonders what the "planet" holds forth to its new persons. The answer seems to be that in some mysterious but negligent way the planet connection will strengthen each person's "natural instinct to grow" and to realize his or her "personal potentiality": The planet, we are told, is a cosmic "feedback loop." (What strange creatures we are! Once again terms imbedded within the bureaucratic, technological idiom that the devotees of transcendence despise enter their public pronouncements and evocations of alternatives for the future. Do they really envisage a Psalm which begins, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the feedback loop/from whence cometh my help"?) All will be well, we are assured, once things have been restored to a "human scale."

The transcending new person shares with the born-again evangelical a repudiation of the past, which is to be shucked like a snake's skin; a hatred of complex or structured thought or traditional institutions; a fetish for the immediate and the "real"; a thirst for ecstasy, and a credulity as to the things of this world and how they are run. It is a truly childish performance, a form of magical thinking. Indeed, these new-found identities demand as the price of membership "the sacrifice of autonomous thinking." Although the current religiosity may give meaning, and an identity, to its followers, its maintenance and defense require the uncritical acceptance of authority (in the form of Scripture, or the guru, or some person in the throes of revelation) and hence the suppression of independent thought. I hold that neither born-again evangelicals nor planet-connected persons can achieve genuine virtue, because virtue requires that one have had an opportunity to choose between alternative paths, roughly "evil" and "good." (Traditional Christianity and much of moral philosophy turn on the matter of choice, intention and the statement of reasons.) But to do the right thing for the wrong reason, or no utterable reason at all, whether from confusion, or the unthinking insistence that one is a passive instrument of God's will, is to mystify the process of moral reasoning and to distort and erode one's position in the moral

Document Watch

White House Cabinet Meeting June 20, 1977

The President asked for comments from Cabinet members, beginning with the Secretary of Interior:

Mr. Andrus said that he has just returned from several days in the West fully confirmed in his opinion that "Washington D.C. is not the real world."

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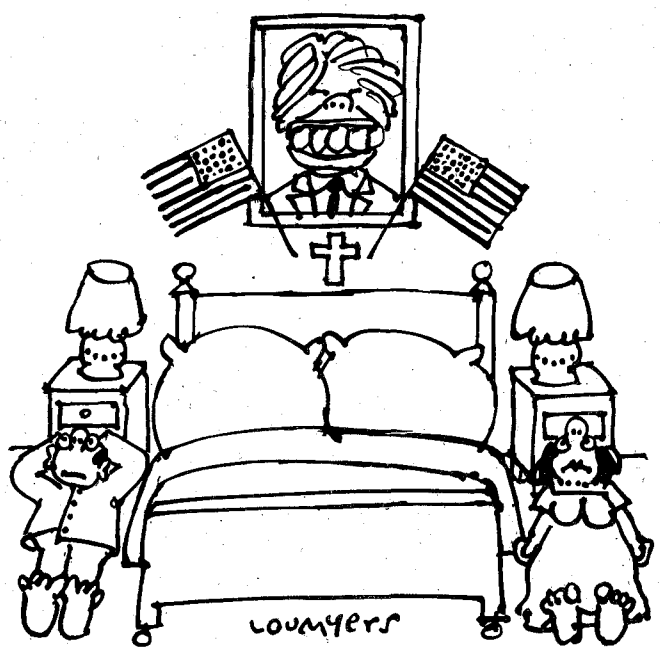
universe. Virtue cannot be achieved by chance; it cannot simply "come with the territory." The unreflective virtue of those whose devotion to various worthy values and social ideals is linked to their unquestioning faith, may pose a threat to the very values and ideals they unthinkingly embrace. For as Freud argues, should the devout believer begin to waver in his faith, and if that faith has served as the sufficient guarantor of his private virtue and social ethics, an erosion of both virtue and ethics may flow from the loss of religious belief. That is the basis of Freud's claim that ethics is too important to be left to religion: the route to nihilism is paved not so much with good intentions as with unintended "goods."

At stake in these matters is the nature of the person as a member of the moral universe, his or her standing in the social community, and an epistemological presumption (imbedded within a particular philosophy of mind or moral psychology such as Freud's) that what has been cogently thought and reasoned out, in a noncoerced, nonmanipulated space, will be available to others and defensible before them. The standards of both private virtue and public ethics require moral justification and that process must be a public one. This is not stated as a formal principle, nor as some hazing process to which the would-be virtuous must subject themselves. It is a standard and a conviction that refuses to repudiate or to trivialize what Freud calls the court of reason; it exists to fight the tendency to eliminate conflict, ambiguity, doubt and competition among worthy ideals and between worthy adversaries. Freud writes in *Future of an Illusion*, "If the truth of religious doctrine is dependent on an inner experience which bears witness to that truth, what is one to do about the many people who do not have this rare experience? One may require every man to use the gift of reason which he possesses, but one cannot erect, on the basis of a motive that exists only for a very few, an obligation that shall apply to everyone."

The contemporary price of peace of mind comes high. It is a price that further erodes a polity already in a crisis of legitimacy. The subjective and mystified notion of thought and action promotes a tendency toward withdrawal "from the serious social crises of the larger world," a tendency that has prompted several social critics to call the new religiosity "narcissistic." Politics is deemed incorrigible and spiritual conversion is touted as the only means toward the end of some vague notion of social justice or peace. The focus of one's public activities is the conversion of God's lost, strayed, or black sheep. I resist the temptation to make overmuch of this, for it does not strike me as the central issue here: If the religious revival did, in fact, hold forth the possibility of establishing some secure base for a genuine human community, if it had shown itself a rock upon which private virtue forged from moral conflict might be raised, if it accepted and sustained an ideal of human dignity and responsibility that would inspire the faithful to resist and reject ways of treating others that are inconsistent with a shared membership in the moral community, then the purported fact that the new movements feed a conservative social philosophy would by no means constitute sufficient grounds to repudiate them in toto. Instead, one finds within the movements I have depicted an insidious thread of manipulation, paternalism and moralistic intervention—all for the "good" of others, or as means to a "good end."



To secure a foundation for the flourishing of private virtue would be no small thing. But the new religiosity, whether Christian or secular, cannot provide this foundation, for it systematically undercuts the possibility for moral autonomy by its outrageously open-ended, or crudely deterministic, views of human nature. It perpetuates the assumption that reasoning adults should become as credulous children. And, along the way, it serves as a bastion for a reactionary aesthetics propelled by the vulgar dictum that films or plays or records or paintings which do not hector or uplift or offer "positive" images are either useless or evil. To have thoughts without the cloying and smothering blanket of wishful certitude demands an attentiveness, a contemplative impulse, that allows us to tap both reason and emotion, and sustains our attempts to raise a bulwark against social tendencies toward suppression. Such thinking is neither totally subjective or denuded of all personal reference; it is public-oriented in a thoroughgoing fashion. It is, complicatedly, public and private, reason-giving and reflective, rule-governed and imaginative, reaching down and into, out and toward. It is the child of Eros and Logos who refuses to reject one for the other, knowing that in the intricate inner and outer dialogue between the two (through their representatives on this earth) something occasionally marvelous or worthy or noble may happen. It offers grounds for thought and for action, not for what is usually called hope but is most often simply smug certitude as to one's convictions and unshakable faith as to the future. □

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Advertising

HUMAN SURVIVAL

by G.A. McLaughlin

Because culture-driven Zionists, blacks, and ethnic drumbeaters become followers of special interest groups espousing less than the universal good—with subsequent loss of individuality—they are of little or no help in solving the problems of human survival. Because the Congress of the United States is easily influenced by the lobbyists of the military-industrial complex (expecially in sustaining Presidential vetoes of bills passed by Congress), it is of little or no help in solving the problems of human survival. Because the people of the United States are disturbed by the singleness of purpose of culture-driven Zionists, blacks, and ethnic drumbeaters, by the strength of the lobby of the military-industrial complex, and by the weakness of the Congress of the United States, they are of little or no help in solving the problems of human survival.

It is up to the people of Europe to solve the problems of human survival. And it behooves them to do so. Lawless generals of the armies of the two superpowers might take it upon themselves to initiate and then contain nuclear warfare at the expense of their European friends. On center stage, most friendly people of Swéden, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, and Italy must always be wary of lawless generals, authoritarians who would have the people follow them blindly.

Thoughtful individuals, men and women, teachers on center stage, hold themselves responsible for their actions and teach young and old to hold themselves responsible for their actions—especially teachings for human survival.

In the nineteenth century, my ancestors migrated from Europe to the United States: Vincent from Provence, Neulens from Brabant, Looby from Tipperary, and McLaughlin from Tyrone. I read up on the friendly people who inhabit the land of my ancestors not only to learn what they do to prevent nuclear war but also to test my ability to be objective.

In Ireland, the four archbishops and the twenty-four bishops of the Irish Catholic Church (Roman Catholic Church) control the primary and secondary schools, the censorship, most of the social services, and the legislature—when they so desire. The bishops wield their power, spiritual and temporal, in a paternalistic manner, suitable to an authoritarian theocracy. A majority of the Irish Catholics are true believers who willingly accept the teachings of the Church on matters of faith and morals and willingly submit to the dictates of the bishops of the Church. Many Irish Catholics are prudent believers who accept the teachings of the Church and submit to the dictates of the bishops, because they know they could be out of a job and on a blacklist if they question the teachings or the dictates, though they be duly elected legislators or whatever. A Church-sponsored organization, the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart, has more than 450,000 members: boys and girls take solemn pledges not to drink any form of intoxicating liquors and, on becoming adults, most of them honor their pledges.

Relatively free and happy individuals, products of good and proper social systems, abstain from drinking intoxicating liquors of their own volition.

The Belgian Masonic Lodges and the Roman Catholic Church share the responsibility for the creation of two educational systems in Belgium. One educational system is controlled by the state and the other by the Roman Catholic Church (which receives state subsidies). The law requires that the language used in education be French south of a Maestricht-Boulogne line, Dutch in the north, German in the east, and the pupil's mother tongue, French or Dutch, in the Brussels region. The law requires that all teaching personnel in a given school speak the same language. To comply with the law in the Brussels region, four schools must be made available on just demand: a Dutch language state school, a Dutch language Church school, a French language state school, and a French language Church school.

Segregrated schools teach yesterday's and the day-before-yesterday's ways of living, and the word is culture; integrated schools teach tomorrow's and the day-after-tomorrow's ways of living, and the word is harmony.

The French military-industrial complex plays a part in the education of the French children. Immature children, from all *départements*, are fascinated and awed by the display of the War God of the Church of the Dome in the Invalides. The display of the War God causes mature children, from all *départements*, to be nauseated and sad with thoughts of what society needs and what society gets. Society needs men and women with sound intentions to build tomorrow's society, men and women whose decisions are tempered by a good and proper set of social values. Society gets sick creatures like the Parisian War God, military generals, who will decide to drop nuclear bombs on civilian populations, though retaliation is certain, and will not heed entreaties to stay the dropping of the bombs.

These mature children, on returning home, think about the rumors of the ultimate in police weapons, the neutron bomb. The rumors say that the 7th *Arrondissement* is to be used as a test area, that a neutron bomb with a rating of 83,721 heads is to be set off by the military in the Place Vauban. The rumors credit the military with saying that there will be no property damage in the 7th *Arrondissement*, not even a cracked window pane in the Church of the Dome. With thoughts of the myth of being protected by the military, these mature children, who will soon be young adults, say to those who would visit Paris, "Please, stay out of the 7th *Arrondissement*."

Young adults become individuals on leaving school with its gangs and cliques and entering a work force with strangers, men and women, where everyone must cooperate to do the day's work—cooperation, respect, love, survival.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

A Long Way From 'Cutter and Bone'

GENE LYONS

BLACK ANGUS. *By Newton Thornburg. Little, Brown and Co. 243 pp. $8.95.*

When his scarifying *Cutter and Bone* was published just over a year and a half ago, the title page called it Newton Thornburg's second novel. The first was *To Die in California*, a quite affecting story of a Missouri farmer who comes to the Coast to investigate the supposedly accidental death of a son there. Now comes *Black Angus*, but Thornburg has in the interim evidently decided to admit authorship of two earlier potboilers he had previously disowned, making this his fifth rather than his third novel. A reviewer can only speculate upon the writer's motives, but both the strengths and weaknesses of *Black Angus*, with its resemblance to a commercial thriller, seem to provide several clues.

Not that the subject matter of *Black Angus* seems all that promising from the point of view of big sales. Bob Blanchard runs a cattle farm in the Missouri Ozarks just north of the Arkansas line. Historically speaking, the area is as difficult a land to wrench a living from as there is in the United States. Unlike most of his sullen, pick-up-riding neighbors in what Blanchard's wife Susan calls "this fucking, Bible-swilling, cow-ridden backwater," however, he has moved there by choice from somewhere else. Four years before the story begins he was a successful St. Louis advertising copywriter and Susan an upwardly mobile broadcasting executive. They grew tired of the lives they were leading and began to think of escape to "the true and beautiful lives they were all going to live here in the hills, away from the sickness of cities and commerce." Unlike many of the newcomers who flock to the Ozarks these days, however, they have neither an outside source of income such as a trust fund or a hashish dealership, nor the desire to live like proverbial gypsies. Blanchard has just enough money from his widowed mother's will to make a down payment on his 600-acre spread and to set himself up in the cattle business. From that point forward he is in the hands of the commodities market and our old friend Mother Nature, a contrary bitch idealized by people who make their money in town.

When the novel opens Blanchard is at the end of three years of raising 40¢ cattle at a cost of 50¢ per pound, and to compound matters learns that his prize Angus bull has infected much of his herd with Bang's disease, formerly known as brucellosis, an incurable disorder that causes cows to abort spontaneously. His whole herd must be quarantined and the sick animals sold for immediate slaughter for about half what they might otherwise bring. The bank will get the farm.

To add to Blanchard's miseries, his wife has long since tired of rusticity, their 12-year-old son hides in the house all day because of his asthma, and the neighbors are somewhat less than neighborly:

> . . .the two of them, with Whit, came innocent and unprepared, like Victorian English tourists expecting the Hottentots to serve afternoon tea. Well, they did not. . . .For almost a year Susan had tried, forcing herself to attend their Tupperware parties and PTA meetings and saying hello at the country grocery and the stores in town. But the result was always the same: stout, prim, corseted women in beehive hairdos not even giving her the backhand of civility, just the dull flat-out glare of contempt and even hatred, as an outsider, a city fool who talked uppity and wore pants all the time and did nothing with her hair, and above all, did not go to church.

Most people would beat it back to the suburbs as quickly as they could, which is exactly what Susan wants to do. For Blanchard, however, things are more difficult: "it was not just money he was fighting for, but his life, his life as a man." Then too there is the matter of his 34-year-old retarded brother Tommy, for whom he feels an enormous love and responsibility, and who has grown quite attached to his pets Spot, Kitty, and Blackie the Bull. Tommy came to him when their mother died; in the suburbs, Blanchard fears, he would need to be institutionalized. The neighbors there would insist upon it.

The virtues of the novel are the virtues of Thornburg's style, always exact and often epigrammatic, as the above passage with its Hottentots makes clear. Both *To Die in California*

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RIPENING

The longer we are together
the larger death grows around us.
How many we know by now
who are dead! We, who were young,
now count the cost of having been.
And yet as we know the dead
we grow familiar with the world.
We, who were young and loved each other
ignorantly, now have come
to know each other in love, married
by what we have done, as much
as by what we intend. Our hair
turns white with our ripening
as though to fly away in some
coming wind, bearing the seed
of what we know. It was bitter to learn
that we come to death as we come
to love, bitter to face
the just and solving welcome
that death prepares. But that is bitter
only to the ignorant, who pray
it will never happen. Having come
the bitter way to better prayer, we have
the sweetness of ripening. How sweet
to know you by the signs of this world.

Wendell Berry

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and *Cutter and Bone* succeed because of it, their tight, almost detective novel plots lent credence by the sharpness of Thornburg's powers of observation and his ability to enunciate certain home truths in a manner just this side of melodrama. *Black Angus* has many such passages, one of the best occurring when a bearish friend of Blanchard's named Shea physically humiliates a pusillanimous redneck in a bar for mistreating a dog, only to be confronted later that night by the same man and a pack of friends, all of them armed with shotguns and rifles: "Guns rearranged the atoms of life, created a wholly different and wholly terrible world in which everything was suddenly at critical mass, in which everything counted, *for keeps*." Thornburg can do the same thing with physical descriptions, as in this one of cattle being herded into a headgate "wall-eyed with terror, plunging and crowding, fouling their black coats with a founting olive diarrhea."

The pleasures of such prose are seductive. To keep most discerning readers from feeling guilty about it in a novel that is not satirical, however, a novelist must be careful with *probability*. Readers must be kept believing in and caring about the dilemma of a group of characters who get themselves into the kinds of fearful binds Thornburg's novels have involved, and they must appreciate the artifice of the thing without at the same time being prodded in the ribs with it. On both accounts this time, *Black Angus* is a letdown from Thornburg's best.

What happens is that Shea, a desperate man fleeing from his own life as a copywriter as well as from wife and children, convinces Blanchard that his answer lies in rustling his own cattle and using the sales money and the insurance proceeds to finance himself again. This he hopes to arrange through the good offices of a poisonous sociopath called Little, who happens to be the brother of a nearly illiterate barmaid named Ronda with whom Blanchard is somewhat improbably having an affair. Ronda wants out of the Ozarks, and Blanchard, needing her help, half-ashamedly poses as the ticket, letting her think he will take the money and run with her to California or Las Vegas where she hopes to find her ideal, "men with tanned foreheads and razor-styled hair." If that sounds a bit self-conscious and precise for a woman who lives in a tacky mobile home and asks Blanchard questions like "just what the hell *is* a senate anyway?"—it is. Later on, when Blanchard's wife has found out about Ronda and gone back to St. Louis, vowing never to return, Ronda moves in with him and begins leaving notes: *"Have gone to by grosries befor we all starv—be back around one."* He doesn't know whether to be more irritated by her spelling or his snobbery about it.

Blanchard never convinces himself that the scheme is morally defensible; he is too straight for casuistry. But for a man about to risk his life by committing a serious felony, he takes few sensible precautions. The very *contrivance* of Thornburg's plot, while one keeps eagerly turning the pages to see what will happen, starts to seem thin. Giving away the ending would be unfair, but when in the end Innocence is trampled by Nature Unleashed and Blanchard is left empty-handed and -hearted, that contrivance seems suddenly to have robbed the novel of the solidity of its vision. How arrogant and stupid, Blanchard thinks to himself, "to have thought that he could have gotten away with it, escaped the common fate of his countrymen, fled the city's canyons of death and futility and built here in the wild a structure of life and purpose." As a city-bred type myself who has spent several years in the boondocks and lives now in Little Rock, a metropolis having most of the blessings and the limitations of both city and country, hard by the Ozarks, I lost interest in Blanchard and his dilemma about then, not because I could not sympathize with someone holding those ideas but because I ceased believing in his integrity as a fully imagined character. It all seemed too pat, too conveniently assembled. Thornburg is so good that if he decides to write merely thrillers, I will eagerly read them, but I won't expect them to be what *Cutter and Bone* led me to think the author had set out to be: a novelist as good as anyone around. □

Stalking the Greasy Kid Stuff

ALICE STEWART TRILLIN

ALICE, LET'S EAT. *By Calvin Trillin. Random House. 192 pp. $7.95.*

Alice, Let's Eat is *not* a book about where to get the best hamburger in the world. I should know. Since Calvin Trillin, the author, says on the first page that he intends to make some revelations about me, his wife, in the book, I think that I am justified in making some revelations right here in *The Nation* about the food he touts so enthusiastically. (The editors of *The Nation* said something about "giving me an opportunity for rebuttal.") I welcome this opportunity, not only because I feel the need to break out of the role of straight person consistently assigned to me throughout *Alice, Let's Eat* but because I feel an obligation to the potential readers of the book to warn them about what they're in for. I have a recurring fantasy of some nice, perfectly innocent American family saving up for their yearly vacation, packing their camping gear and children in the car, setting off across the country, *Alice, Let's Eat* in hand, in search of the perfect barbecue, which is, of course, in Kansas City. They are pleased about all the money they have saved by forgoing a trip to Italy, where they would only have been able to eat perfect fettuccine with white truffles and cream, dross in comparison with the ultimate ham hock they hope to find if they follow in Trillin's footsteps. I am not against quests for the perfect ham hock or the perfect barbecue or even, for that matter, for the perfect roast polecat haunch (a dish Trillin insists, incorrectly, was not on the plate at a wild game supper he once took me to in Vermont). But I think that anyone starting out on such a quest should be aware that his guide is someone who will travel all the way to a place called Horse Cave, Ky. because he likes the way the name Horse Cave, Ky. sounds when he drops it to me over the phone. He also likes to say ham hocks almost as much as he likes to eat them, and anyone taking a thousand-mile detour to one of the restaurants mentioned in *Alice, Let's Eat* should be the kind of person who likes to say ham hocks too. This is offered as a warning by someone who has been assigned the role of heavy in her husband's book just because she likes to say fettuccine with white truffles and cream occasionally—a dish considered by some to represent the elitist Eastern Establishment.

I suppose that anyone who insists on taking *Alice, Let's Eat* literally—like the occasional reader of an earlier Trillin work, *American Fried*, who complained about the greasiness of Winstead's hamburgers or the excessive simplicity of the decor of Arthur Bryant's barbecue restaurant—gets what he or she deserves. These literalists may be, it occurs to me, the same

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readers who, after an alleged quote from H.L. Mencken appeared in a Trillin column in *The Nation* several month's ago, were astonished by Mencken's prescience in so accurately predicting the administration of Jimmy Carter. Such literalists should, when traveling, stick to the *Mobil Guide*. □

And Now A Word From...

JOHN S. ROSENBERG

THE SPONSOR. *By Eric Barnouw. Oxford University Press. 220 pp. $10.*

Eric Barnouw should be recognized as a major national resource. His magisterial three volume *History of Broadcasting in the United States* towers over everything else in the new pop field of media studies, and his new book, *The Sponsor*, is the most incisive and well-written study to date of the economic structure and ideological impact of modern broadcasting. Paul Goodman once wrote that "the only part of television which has fulfilled its promise at all is the commercial." *The Sponsor* not only explains why Goodman was right but how all of television —programs, news, public service announcements, even public television— has become in effect one giant commercial, how, as Barnouw puts it, we have come to be dominated by "a dramaturgy that reflects the demographics of the supermarket."

It was not always so. At the first Washington Radio Conference in 1922 —when radio was just getting off the ground—Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover announced that "it is inconceivable that we should allow so great a possibility for service to be drowned in advertising chatter." For a short time it appeared that Hoover was right. The managers of WEAF (later WRCA and WNBC) in New York delayed a talk on tooth care, offered by a toothpaste company, while they debated whether anything so personal should be discussed on the air. In 1927 a manual on radio advertising stated that a sponsor "does not earn the right to inflict selling propaganda in the midst of broadcasting entertainment any more than an agreeable weekend guest may suddenly launch into an insurance solicitation at Sunday dinner."

As broadcasting "matured" these early inhibitions were quickly eroded by the immense profits to be derived from advertising. After an intermission for World War II the postwar consumer goods explosion brought back a frenzy of commercialism to the air, aided by the new wave of quiz and game shows where contestants were showered with consumer goods. "Thus sponsor commercials," Barnouw observes, "were surrounded by mini-commercials for subsidiary sponsors," and the leaping, screaming housewives served as "cheerleaders for the consumer culture."

In these early cold-war years of blacklist and conformity the chill extended further into the substance of programming than is usually recognized. Nothing controversial was allowed. When, for example, Rod Serling wrote a screenplay based loosely on the Emmett Till murder case in Mississippi it had to be substantially rewritten to appease the sponsor, U.S. Steel—even though he had already attempted to remove the racial issue by substituting an old pawnbroker for the slain black youth! Everything Southern had to be taken out. Nor is such sponsor skittishness limited to the cold-war years. In the mid-1960s when Dave Rintels wanted to write a segment of *The FBI* on the bureau's investigation of the church bombing in Birmingham, he was told that he could do so but that "the church must be in the North, there could be no Negroes involved, and the bombing could have nothing to do with civil rights." Apparently the Ford Motor Co. did not want to offend any prospective pickup buyers in Dixie.

Occasionally sponsor control has taken on absurd qualities. One advertising agency scrupulously removed every appearance of the word "gas" from a *Playhouse 90* script on the Nuremberg trials at the insistence of the sponsor, the natural gas association, which did not want its product associated with concentration camps. In another instance an advertising executive told of two tobacco companies: one insisted that the villain on its program not smoke a filter cigarette (which it made); and the other insisted that the villain smoke only filter cigarettes (which it did not make). "It's amusing," the executive allowed, "but not ridiculous. The association of the product that might be recognized as the client's product with a villain, a murderer, or whatever, is certainly something to be avoided."

He is right. It is not ridiculous. Or at least no more ridiculous than allowing so important and influential a resource as broadcasting to be devoted so heavily to selling soap. "An advertiser has very specific practical objectives in mind," CBS president Frank Stanton explained in 1960. "He is spending a very large sum of money. . .to increase his sales, to strengthen his distribution and to win public favor." Thus, Stanton concluded, "it seems perfectly obvious that advertisers cannot and should not be forced into programs incompatible with their objectives." Since one of the most important of these objectives is to offend as few people as possible, it also seems "perfectly obvious" that the blandness and banality of much of television stems directly from its commercial structure. As ABC-TV vice president for programming Bob Shanks put it: "Program makers are supposed to devise and produce shows that will attract mass audiences without unduly offending these audiences or too deeply moving them emotionally. Such ruffling, it is thought, will interfere with their ability to receive, recall, and respond to the commercial message."

Although most viewers tend to view commercials as necessary interruptions in their favorite programs, Barnouw makes it abundantly clear that the very purpose of the programs—a purpose that governs them from inception to airing—is to bring us to the commercials. Others have argued, as Barnouw does, that "a network commercial is likely to promote not only a product but a way of life, a view of the world, a philosophy." And Barnouw is not the first to note that even entertainment programs promote "unsuspected ideological premises," although his discussion of the spy and crime shows is especially enlightening. Nor is he alone in suggesting how public broadcasting's increasing need for corporate underwriting affects its productions. What is unique about *The Sponsor* is the skill, subtlety and wisdom with which these observations on the structure of the media are woven together in such a slim and immensely readable volume. Readers of *The Nation* (September 30) are aware of the important debate surrounding the proposed rewrite of the Communications Act by Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin's House Subcommittee on Communications. No one interested in that debate—or, indeed, in the future of broadcasting in America—can afford to ignore this book. □

John Rosenberg is at work on a biography of Clifford Durr, who served as a commissioner on the Federal Communications Commission from 1941 to 1948.

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Encountering History

JULES CHAMETZKY

THE THIRTIES AND AFTER: Poetry, Politics, People, 1930-1970. *By Stephen Spender. Random House. 217 pp. $10.*

Early in his new memoir Stephen Spender poses a question that has engaged literati and ideologues at least since the 1930s and after. How is it that the great figures of modernism—Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, Pound, throw in Wyndham Lewis—heroes in their time of the avant-garde, models for the artist's assault on bourgeois complacencies, turn out in their public and political lives to be such reactionaries, even Fascists? Of course to his talented generation of poets at Oxford in the late 1920s—the extraordinary group of Auden, Betjeman, Day-Lewis, MacNeice, Rex Warner—"The Waste Land" was seen "simply" as being about the end of Western civilization, and not at all, such was their ideological naivete, "political."

Later in the 1930s, when the young writers of Spender's generation turned Left, Eliot's work could still be seen as a valid diagnosis of our civilization's malaise; it was not the poet's duty to offer a solution, and if Mr. Eliot turned to his famous triad of classicism in art, royalism in politics, catholicism in religion for his own salvation, it was perfectly logical for young poets like John Cornford to turn to Marxism and communism and, along with Julian Bell, Christopher Caudwell and Ralph Fox, die in the International Brigade in Spain. Spender and many of his slightly older group flirted briefly with communism (Orwell put them down as "the pink pansy Left"), then turned from it with one degree of animus or another.

Spender is thoughtful about these matters, tries to be fair to the revolutionaries and the reactionaries (the title of one long section of his book), even though the reactionaries come off somewhat better. One caustic sentence of Spender's, out of context, might turn the reader against his evaluations: "If Auden and Isherwood," he writes, "had written a play on the theme of Cornford and Bell, one can well imagine that the deaths of these heroes on the battlefield would have been seen as the finale of a dialogue with a chorus of artistic mothers and Bloomsbury aunts." He is on much more sympathetic gound when he concludes that the reactionaries can be understood as writing out of their tragic sense of modern life whereas "the Cornfords and Bells lived and died the tragedy."

Spender's memoir—really a collection of short articles, reviews, journal entries, introduced by essays offering a background to each of the decades—is best where his genuine affections are engaged and his gift for the concrete comes into play. His description of beleaguered but culturally rich London during the war, or his evocation of its (and his) dangling-man mood at the brink of war, and of mad and ruined postwar Germany conveyed through weird conversations and odd encounters, affect one's imagination like poems and good fiction; and his reminiscences of Auden, Eliot, Cyril Connolly are models of cleareyed and unillusioned homage. It is all a very good read, especially in the early parts, but with the '50s, and '60s a certain brittleness begins to be felt.

The '50s, he says, were a negative period in his own life, "largely taken up with anti-communism." He had in the early '50s "a strong feeling of the complete rotting away of England." Of course, hovering over all of this is the unsavory *Encounter*-Congress of Cultural Freedom-CIA affair. As the one respected co-editor of the journal, and one who was to suffer from the revelation of the CIA role in supporting his magazine, Spender provides, for my taste, a rather too short and disingenuous account of the matter.

He briefly describes the Congress of Cultural Freedom, which sponsored *Encounter*, and its "remarkably intelligent" secretariat of anti-Communists in Paris. According to him, he and Irving Kristol successfully resisted their effort to occasionally influence editorial policy. The journal maintained its independent existence, he says, and in any case, the political articles were the domain of the American editors (whom besides Kristol, he fails to name or discuss). When rumors arose that one of the forty different American foundations supporting the CCF was a CIA conduit—Spender does not say it was a chief source of funds, although a remark he reports by Julian Fleischmann, that "it was he who paid for *Encounter*," through his Farfield Foundation suggests that it was—Spender was disturbed enough to question Fleischmann and his Foundation director about it, only to receive an abusive letter in reply. Still, it was not until *The Nation* and *Ramparts* in 1966 exposed the CIA connection that Spender resigned (by then, however, he was only "corresponding editor." Frank Kermode had taken over earlier, and he too quit after the *Ramparts* exposé).

I do believe that Spender was something of a dupe in all this. What remains disturbing, however, are the lessons he or we draw from the experience. Even now, all Spender is prepared to take a stand on is that as a director of an enterprise whose source of funds were unknown to him, he was forced unwittingly into the deception of others.

> What would one think of the position of a member of Parliament who was a director of a firm in which the source of money provided was concealed from him? He would be put in a position in which deception practiced on him resulted in his deceiving others.

Well and good; but the critical question left unasked, not to say unanswered, is what if he had known that *Encounter* was being supported by the CIA? In the ambiance of the late '50s and early '60s, would he have dissociated himself from it? So deeply were even liberal anti-Communists of the period caught up in and compromised by a Manichaean vision of the world that the answer might not do much to bolster disinterested service of truth that is the only justification of intellectuals.

Furthermore, the sketchiness of his treatment suggests that Spender does not quite perceive the depth of feeling and repugnance aroused in the American intellectual community by those revelations. I recall a protest in 1972 signed by over seventy well-known writers and editors (a list that begins with Hannah Arendt) against the Ford Foundation's offering *Encounter* a grant for the purpose of aiding its distribution in the United States. There was probably a certain amount of nativism and protectionism motivating the protest, but the protesters were "made uneasy, as well, by the political implications of this effort to promote and expand *Encounter*'s influence in this country." Perhaps it was all the last glow of the '60s, but the response was genuine.

As for Spender's treatment of the '60s, it too can exasperate an American reader. The tone is occasionally Olympian (we are described as having such a propensity to take things so *intensely*), and he seems to deplore that "frenetic minority" which ultimately

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pulled Johnson down with its "chorus of rage and contempt." The admiration for Johnson is frankly bewildering—"A man of great sensitivity concealed under a rhinoceros hide exterior," whom he compares to a Roman emperor from the provinces. A more earthy American judgment might be that he was a familiarly corrupt character on a grand scale, a hustler from the sticks.

I cannot leave a discussion of Stephen Spender on this sour note. His previous writings, the wonderful autobiography *World Within World*, lines and images from his poems that explode still in the mind, his continued effort to bridge the chasm between private sensibility and public life (for the sake of enlarging the one and humanizing the other) must be honored. He quotes several times Auden's lines dedicated to him:

> Private faces in public places
> Are wiser and nicer
> Than public faces in private places.

More than most engagé people in our difficult era Spender has retained his liberal and civilized virtues. I wish only that he would apply them to the difficult questions of the '50s and '60s as well as to the '30s and '40s. □

Virtues of the Common Scold

EMILE CAPOUYA

REVIEWING THE FORTIES. *By Diana Trilling. Introduction by Paul Fussell. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 272 pp. $9.95.*

Diana Trilling's column, "Fiction in Review," appeared in this journal from 1942 to 1949. Near the end of that time I read an essay of hers that does not figure in this selection but which I have remembered ever since. *The Nation*'s critic said that in the season just past she had not come across a new novel that was worth reading. For me, that announcement killed literary journalism as I had known it, the unpaid arm of book publishers' advertising and promotion efforts. Literary journalism has since been resurrected—the poor we always have with us—and on occasion I have sunk to practicing it in the very fashion that Diana Trilling rejected. But mostly, with her example in mind, I have felt free of any obligation to celebrate the unspeakable. Naturally, I was elated to find that *Reviewing the Forties* is a remarkable book.

Let's talk first about Mrs. Trilling's faults, which are not all venial. To begin with, she can be savage with authors who have not the happiness of pleasing her, as if in her eyes an indifferent artist had forfeited the right to live. Indeed, one of her leading traits as a critic is an intellectual and spiritual arrogance that is sometimes worthy of a grosser name—complacency, an assurance of certain certainties, or mere snobbery that dismisses what it may not wholly understand. Since one's own sins look heinous in another, I find that irritating. But on the other hand, I think I know that this aspect of Mrs. Trilling's literary personality is at least partly the response of a decent fastidiousness to the shock of widespread assumptions and preferences that were distressing enough when she wrote these essays, and whose definitive triumph she foresaw. The books that this critic treats with killing contempt may in fact be contemptible, even if their authors are not. It would have been better to be kind, but after all, what were they doing in that galley? In the end, I think that what is really objectionable about Mrs. Trilling's indignation is that she rouses the blood lust of the righteous.

There is a recurring complaint in these essays about the failings of the short story as a literary form, and another—which appears to have served Diana Trilling as her King Charles's head from 1942 to '49—about the practice of casting psychoanalysts as villains in novels. It seems to me that she takes up both these questions by the wrong handle, but even so she is instructive. Her charge against the short story is that its bobtailed condition literally restricts its scope, defeats any serious artistic intention, and does not permit it to be psychologically adequate to our sense of our own lives. Chekhov she regards as a great happy exception among short-story writers, and somewhat illogically, given her premises, she seems to blame later authors for not doing as well. Or perhaps she blames them for essaying the short story at all. The issues here are complex, but it seems to me that the short story in the abstract is a universal form, and the scriptures and classic literature of many nations provide examples that Mrs. Trilling could not object to in such terms. Her quarrel, then, is not with the short story but with the way in which writers have been making them in the fairly recent past.

The point is that Chekhov invented a variation of the short story that we must assume was exactly suited to his great talents, but which in its degenerated form, *The New Yorker* story, is suited to lesser talents and produces results whose fallen value is proportionate to the speed of their authors' flights from Chekhov. The same thing happened with another innovation of genius, Hemingway's prose. In both cases the formal aspects of the invention are readily imitable while the mind and heart that conceived it were unique. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the first brief chapter of *A Farewell to Arms* is the only example of the genre—powerful enough to produce a revolution in American, British and Continental prose, but with a great falling off in the energy of insight, and not only among Hemingway's conscious and unconscious imitators but in his own later writings. Now, that process of devolution is just what Diana Trilling is

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HARVEST

The farmer walks to the center of the field
and runs his fingers along a stalk of wheat
finding and denting a single kernel with his thumbnail.
He does it privately, as if examining a tender part of his body.
For days the family has been preparing for this —
long tables beneath the shade trees to feed the threshers,
the heavy oven fired night and day
its heat shimmering along the roofline.
As he walks back through the tall grain
the farmer says something to himself,
and warm air moves over the field sending ahead
the deeply swaying, silent yes.

Tom Absher

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pointing to in the case of Chekhov and his epigones, but she chooses to tax the genre rather than the writers, as if the two world wars and the prospect of universal destruction were not enough to explain the short views and tidy pessimism of the modern Chekhovians—setting aside the fact that they are not Chekhov.

When writers present unsympathetic portraits of psychoanalysts, Mrs. Trilling echoes Kent:

> *Do;*
> *Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow*
> *Upon the foul disease.*

There's a good deal in that, of course. But why should she imagine that any corporate body does not richly deserve roasting? Much of the world's important work is performed by third-rate people—for example, the work of the President of the United States in the decades since the first appearance of these essays. Psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, moreover, have the power to loose and to bind, and it is notorious that some of them are simply not up to responsibilities of that order. Revolt against priests inspired religious reform, but since our modern healers take their stand on much lower ground, the revolt against them can scarcely rise above personalities and slander. But it is puzzling that Mrs. Trilling supposes that in the unremarkable novels she is reviewing, impious hands are desecrating the Ark of the Covenant. Surely most psychoanalysts bear the same relation to Freud that most Christians do to Jesus. Their presence on the psychological landscape of the middle class is sufficiently imposing, and they minister to a passion for minute self-scrutiny that makes a farce of the ideal of self-knowledge—bestowing the fee upon the foul disease. I doubt that it occurs to the critic to object to Moliere's ridiculing physicians, some of whom must have been earnest and dedicated men, and I don't see why the tribe of psychoanalysts must be spared.

What I find significant is that Mrs. Trilling noticed that in the '40s writers had taken to abusing the doctor of souls. I think she was acute to do so, and that she detected a change in manners that has social implications of a certain importance—first, as she remarks, that the sick resent, in their cussed human way, the person who offers to heal them. But then, too, that they resent the arrogance with which the man of art acquits himself of his cure of souls; the regimen of concentration on self that he espouses; the dogma that the reality principle sanctions whatever social arrangements we may have drifted into, while stigmatizing the spirit's attempt to escape them; or simply the tenet that psychoanalysis does you no good unless you pay for it. These matters are not in themselves earthshaking but they point beyond the relations that people have with their analysts to the relations they have with the rest of mankind.

For all that, Diana Trilling is a splendid critic—so much so that if she had her career to make today she would be in trouble. She understands that literature is a dramatization of values, and that all its other attractions are at the service of that central preoccupation. Values inevitably introduce the notions of better and worse, and Mrs. Trilling invokes either category with perfect sang-froid; her vehemence arises not from a mistaken scruple that such judgments are not the critic's proper business—she is sure they are—but reasonably enough from the knowledge that her values are the monopoly of the small portion of the educated class that has an educated heart, that there are but few in that insecure bastion, and she and they are surrounded by oceans of misapprehension about basic questions like which way is up. She is an excellent stylist, so that the occasional wooden sentence snaps your neck back. And what appears to be characteristic and characterological is her delight in the real thing, which, when she comes upon it in a writer, lifts her own writing to an intensity of praise which is ravishing in its music, its clarity and its subtle discriminations. The pleasure of being able to consent wholly to a writer's purposes appears to be intense for her, and when those occasions present themselves she is exalted in a way that would be embarrassing if she were not completely concentrated upon the work that moves her. At such moments she is herself wonderfully moving and infects the reader with a sympathy that seems less an emotion than a form of knowledge. That is a great gift. It tranforms good literary journalism into art.

When I reflect on the few writers in her own or some neighboring field who are of her caliber and moral weight and are whole-souled as she, I am dismayed at the realization that every one of them is more or less of her generation. In these essays of the '40s she particularly sought and cherished the qualities of what Maurice Valency once called "writing as a lost art." Those qualities imply an imaginative sympathy that is now nearly extinct, and in any case very much at a discount in the market. The trouble is that the imaginative sympathy I mean is the source of powerful energies, energy of conception, energy of character to carry great conceptions to their accomplishment. Clearly, we can't add a cubit to our stature by taking thought, but when the very names of those things have fallen out of common use and are current only in a smallish group of persons who are no longer young, one is reduced to praying for the unforeseeable. There is evidence on every hand that more and more persons who can reasonably be regarded as educated can no longer recognize those qualities in literature, and do not miss them. When Diana Trilling wrote these pieces she could address herself with confidence to readers whom she could regard as embodying a common sense that was continuous with the experience of the race; I do not think that confidence would be justified now.

ANGELS FOR CEZANNE

The almost invisible
shuttlecock at dusk
floats over the fine net,
coming to bloom in
the empty gardenia bush.
Not because happiness
exists, but because
it can be deduced
from continuities
such as these—yew
trees, dark windows
holding back dark sky,
white flower. Here,
at the edges of belief,
the boundary the kites
have crossed breaking away,
it is what holds still
too long that belongs
to us. The angels
between the trees
move more rapidly.
You can feel them
in your kite's crisp
desire the moment before
it leaves you. Above,
in the garden clouds,
home away from home,
tails drawn back in and
tucked into the pattern,
the gentle kites
find suddenly
what cannot hold them—cone,
cylinder, sphere and
signature like breath
scoring the pane
between us.

Jorie Graham

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Well, human beings are endlessly resourceful. It will be interesting to see if our children can work themselves out of this one.

Paul Fussell's introduction is appreciative and lively. By way of background to the essays, it gives a sketch of the '40s that turns out to be largely a catalogue of what the essays instinctively exclude. Mrs. Trilling was dealing in these pieces with what she herself unself-consciously called high culture. Even in those years anything worthy of the name was necessarily invidious—it could not be the same as low culture nor as so-called popular culture because it aspired to be culture par excellence rather than in some Pickwickian sense. The paradox of that necessary rejection and what it implies for the culture of an imperfectly democratic polity appear not to have been lost on Mr. Fussell. The work of the designer exemplifies that theme, drawing its inspiration not from Diana Trilling's essays but from the materials of Mr. Fussell's introduction, so that *Reviewing the Forties* is dressed in a skillful travesty of its concerns. □

MUSIC

DAVID HAMILTON

The libretto that E.M. Forster and Eric Crozier made for Benjamin Britten from Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* is sufficiently enigmatic to send one back to the original work—not for invidious comparison but for clarification. As with other Britten operas, notably *The Turn of the Screw*, such background research does not necessarily clarify; it does, however, make one aware of what has been altered, added, or omitted. Forster and Crozier eschewed numerous subtleties of motivation and philosophical justification set forth by Melville's anonymous narrator; even more significantly, considering the yards and yards of dialogue that they were forced to invent in filling out episodes built on mere hints in the story, they chose to omit important dialogue present in the original.

One of these passages is Captain Vere's lengthy and precise explanation, before the drumhead court, of why the morally innocent though technically guilty Billy should be put to death for his involuntary killing of Claggart, the ship's master-at-arms. In the opera, Vere remains silent at this point, obscuring his motivations, rendering him more passive—a problem further aggravated by the omission, in Britten's 1961 revision of his 1951 opera, of a scene that evidently established quite firmly Vere's respected position in the eyes of the crew. In the version now performed, he turns up first (barring his appearance as an old man in the Prologue) as a bookish bachelor taking wine with his officers, hardly the sort of figure to incite strong loyalties from ordinary seamen.

Such reflections—and others might be cited—express a certain lack of clarity (in my mind, at least) with respect to the import of Britten's *Billy Budd*; but after seeing the new Metropolitan Opera production (the work's first staging in New York), I have no doubt about its impact—as I did have when I first confronted the opera in recorded form a decade ago. The many and obvious motivic connections and their coming together at structural cruxes had seemed, in that purely auditory context, almost too pat, and the extensive "action music" didn't quite hold the attention on its own. All of this turns out to be perfectly gauged in terms of the stage: the requirements of a drama involving a large cast and consequent close attention thereto on the part of the observer are carefully allowed for; the relative weights of theatrical and musical complexity are sagely and fluently balanced. The framing Prologue and Epilogue (inventions of the librettists, showing Vere in old age) allow the introduction in a simple dramatic context of the musical conflicts that will reverberate throughout the busy central action.

And though some of these conflicts seem almost mechanically worked out in the initial episodes of maritime life, they come together most affectingly in the opera's final scenes: Britten's setting of parts of the ballad that Melville placed at his novella's conclusion; the submissive transformation of the crew's inarticulate murmur of protest into their familiar sea chanty; the metamorphosis of Billy's farewell to earth into Vere's final tranquil acceptance of the long-past events.

It is often suggested that music can articulate what words cannot. I am not convinced that in *Billy Budd* Britten's music does precisely that; it may rather represent an evasion—carried out arm in arm with the libretto—of both the tale's moral issues and its homoerotic undertones, waffling on these while intensifying our instinctive sympathetic responses to the characters of Billy and Vere. Even as such, however, the opera remains the work of a major musical and theatrical inventor; the orchestration alone, coping variously and ingeniously with the challenge of an all-male vocal layout, testifies to Britten's absolute craftsmanship.

John Dexter's production for the Met is an admirable piece of theatre. William Dudley has devised an extraordinary multilevel ship, its decks rising and sinking before our eyes. That the black background gives us nothing in the way of maritime atmosphere is probably just, for Melville's ship is more a metaphor for the world of men than a straightforward nautical ambiance. There is nothing in the score about waves or weather, save the mist that foils the pursuit of a French ship—and that too turns out to be a metaphor for Vere's confusion in the face of Claggart's accusations of Billy. More troublesome was the absence of rigging, of any sense of the space "aloft" in yards and masts that was counted on by authors and composer.

Against this minor flaw must be set the fluidity of the set, the vitality of the direction, and the considerable skills, both vocal and dramatic, of the large cast. Richard Stilwell meets the essential visual requirements of Melville's "Handsome Sailor" and sings handsomely as well, for which a slight excess of refinement may easily be forgiven. More than a quarter century after the opera's first performance, Peter Pears can still re-create Captain Vere with convincing effect. Though the effort of controlling the now quaversome tone sometimes impeded his once impeccable clarity of diction, his performance was incomparably moving, and must have formed a strong focus for the rest of the cast. Among the others, let me reluctantly single out James Morris (Claggart), Peter Glossop (Mr. Redburn), James Atherton (the Novice) and Andrew Foldi (the Dansker)—reluctantly, because the casting was remarkably consistent throughout. Raymond Leppard conducted, vigorously if not with as much sense of the work's longer lines as I would have liked.

(By the time this appears in print, the opera's initial run will be over, but three further performances are scheduled in late March, including a broadcast on March 31. Meanwhile, a San Francisco production will go out on National Public Radio stations around November 1; and, of course, the excellent London recording, conducted by the composer, is readily available.)

In addition to *Billy Budd*, the Met's initial weeks offered strong revivals of *Tannhauser* and *Otello*, with some modifications of last season's casting but also the continuing influence of James Levine's irresistible rhythmic impulse and finely gauged discipline. The orchestra played well, too, for James Conlon in an otherwise routine,

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dramatically incoherent *Traviata*; among three debutants in the principal roles, the Russian baritone Yuri Mazurok stood out for vocal evenness, but his reluctance to vary dynamic levels left one quickly bored. More stimulating was the same opera next door at the State Theatre, with the remarkably gifted Ashley Putnam, who can sing and act rings around most Violettas (though some of the things she is asked to do in Frank Corsaro's production still grate against Verdi's music). For all that Miss Putnam's physical style in the first act suggested more an American junior prom than a Parisian courtesan's salon (a style that Henry Price, her Alfredo, perhaps unconsciously seconded), she is the kind of performer who lights up a stage; with discipline, she will surely go far.

The City Opera's new productions were Giordano's *Andrea Chenier* and Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia*. The first of these works has, I think, outlived its time (see *The Nation*, December 3, 1977), nor did this performance offer any compelling arguments for its resuscitation. *Il Turco*, fluent and clever in detail, is not one of Rossini's great comedies; its particularly diverting feature lies in Felice Romani's ingenious libretto, which anticipates Pirandello by including the librettist among the *dramatis personae*. Andrew Porter, who made the lively and mellifluous translation, had particularly good fun with this part, and so did Alan Titus, who sang it with charm and assurance. Beverly Sills, in uneven voice, began by doing a Mae West number instead of the flighty Fiorilla, but later settled more into the spirit of the part; Donald Gramm made much of the title role. Julius Rudel's tempos didn't always seem well judged (though the long first act played better on the broadcast, a week after the premiere), and Tito Capobianco's production served up a surfeit of extraneous gags. The ancestry of *opera buffa* in *commedia dell'arte* is not negligible, but it is not usefully argued by the unceasing activity of four Punchinellos, whose industrious moving of furniture appeared to have been directed with more loving care than the actions of the principals. It is a shame that this director's rich sense of play cannot be focused on the main action, instead of on his customary ubiquitous gaggle of supernumeraries. □

New York Film Festival I

HAROLD CLURMAN

The impression I have received thus far from seeing twelve pictures at the Sixteenth New York Film Festival (Lincoln Center) is one of dreariness. Has our world really gone sickly? Is it possible that no more stimulating films have recently been made than those shown here? An air of spiritual impotence hovers over the occasion.

Still, not all is bad within the bad. *Camouflage*, Krzysztof Zanussi directing, is honest enough: it indicates corruption in the Polish educational system and active dissatisfaction among the students. The head officer of the district is a fraud; the cynical principal of the school had served as ghostwriter for his doctoral thesis. Disruptive eccentricity in one student is a distorted form of protest. The lone student idealist fails to effect any amelioration. One is pleased to learn that a Socialist society does not guarantee purity. The picture, nevertheless, remains dramatically flaccid. It is all shot in less than half light. This may be a technical deficiency or the director may have wished to draw a veil over national sins. As "style" it is counterproductive.

More humorously, Vera Chytilova, in her picture *The Apple Game*, demonstrates that certain hospitals in Czechoslovakia are wildly inefficient, in part because some of its medical personnel are engaged in sexual hanky-panky. She has fun with this and then turns to reading to her nonhero and her audience the lesson of responsibility to women and to one's job. One is glad to see in this film, too, gentle criticism of the state of affairs in another East European country.

Newsfront, by the Australian director/writer, Phillip Noyce, celebrates the daring and bravery of newsreel cameramen and especially the integrity of one of them who refuses to sell out to crassly commercial interests. The script also notes the personal problems that beset the men while employed in their frequently perilous profession. Clips from actual newsreels, recording events of Australian history during the 1940s and '50s (including Nixon's visit), are more arresting than the story.

The less said about the first American entries the better. *Bloodbrothers* (director, Robert Mulligan) depicts a kind of decency emerging from muck. A potentially nice youth promises to escape from his disgustingly brutal Italian neighborhood, which is seemingly inhabited by none but morons and sadists. The "realism" is savagely conventional, the "uplift" predictable and unconvincing.

Robert Altman's *A Wedding* is more "sophisticated." Here a family of idle rich in Dixie takes a comic-satiric beating. Practically every personage in the film is rotten to the core. Adultery is the least of it; stupidity is more prevalent. The officiating priest at the magnificent church wedding is gaga, the guests are drunks, hypocrites, perverts or first cousins to gangsters. The film might please in countries programmatically anti-American. Where all is evil, everything becomes simple; there is no cause for concern. The

PREFACE TO LUTHER'S 95 THESES

Just as a man maybe twice my age, happens
Upon the local cathedral,
After getting the wrong directions to the bank,
And opens the door to walk in, suspecting this
To be an equally good investment, I
Am on my way out for the last time.

I notice he's left his mutt unleashed
On the sidewalk.

The dog with the curled-up tail, the mixed
Ancestry and the remorseful eyes,
Reminds me of the first time
I betrayed myself, leaving even children
Stranded along my way.
He looks into me with those eyes.

I don't think it's fair to leave someone waiting!
I whistle and he comes.

Scott Ruescher

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picture is one huge sore and finally silly in its banal negativism.

Get Out Your Handkerchiefs, of French-Belgian origin, is a goofy "romance" or "fantasy," set forth as a "straight" comedy. A truck driver (Gerard Depardieu) is so enamored of his strangely unresponsive, childless and apparently ailing wife that, to cure her of these disabilities, he offers her to another chump he has encountered in a restaurant. Both men take turns sleeping with her, a rotation to which she indifferently consents. All in vain: she continues to have fainting spells and produces no offspring. Finally, a boy of 13 with a high I.Q. and terrible parents gets the lady with child to her serene satisfaction. I am sure the director, Bertrand Blier, has a fancy explanation for this oddity, and some critics may uncover esoteric or Freudian interpretations, but in plain fact it is a mishmash of not wholly safe ingredients. The one sound element in the film is the presence of Riton (no first name) as the adolescent lover.

Credit for earnestness of intention and technical rigor must be accorded to Francois Truffaut's latest film *The Green Room*. Based on Henry James's (1895) short story, *The Altar of the Dead*, it is a kind of votive offering. A young man, played by Truffaut, loses his betrothed almost at the moment of their marriage. He vows to remain faithful to her forever, and builds a chapel to her memory. Inspired by the thought that none of us is truly mindful of what we owe the dead, the young man bedecks the chapel with an array of splendid candles, each of which honors someone who was once close to him—including, by the way, Henry James himself, though his name is not mentioned.

What little argument or action there is in the film may be taken as solemn reminder that tribute to the dead is a sanctification of life, for the one bespeaks the other. Whether or not this is just a summation of the picture's content, I must confess not to have been edified or touched.

The overly prolific but undoubtedly talented German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder has made several meritorious films, the best of them manifesting an awareness of pain, sickness, cruelty, loneliness and the plight of the socially scorned and unwanted. But I find little to approve of or to be patient with in his latest effort, *Despair* (in English).

Adapted by Tom Stoppard from a Nabokov novel, it is an indigestible mixture of thriller, fashionable witticism, synthetically chic pessimism and luxurious lassitude. The protagonist, known simply as Hermann (Dirk Bogarde) is a Russian emigre who owns a chocolate factory in the Berlin over which Nazism has begun to cast its shadow (nothing much is made of this in the film; it is probably meant to show Hermann's political unawareness.) Hermann is bored by his business, bored by his voluptuous meathead wife, and in the routine of making love to her he suffers the illusion of watching himself. In short, he is not having a good time!

He wants to lose his identity, to get rid of himself. He accomplishes this by killing a vagrant whom he supposedly resembles (there is no resemblance) and making his wife and his associates believe that it is he (Hermann) who has been killed. But his crime is discovered; he is forever trapped within himself.

What the original novel is like I cannot say but the picture seems to have been concocted from its scraps. Its gloom cannot be justified on the ground that we are now living in a sorry time and that a mournful view of life is to be taken for granted by the supereducated, the high-minded or the criminally inclined.

Among the films I have seen, therefore, the one that most interested me was *The Left-Handed Woman*, written and directed by Peter Handke. Yet I doubt whether many will, or ought, to find it interesting! Its chief virtue, apart from outstandingly beautiful photography by Robby Muller, is its reflection of our latter-day malaise. It conveys a state of mind which has increasingly come to be regarded with awe as the profoundest truth.

A married couple has been separated for a long time. On the husband's return to Paris, where his wife lives, he declares his abiding love for her, but she is determined to go on living alone with their child. She offers no reason for this—and none is asked. She is not "cross" with her husband, she simply insists on preserving her solitude. Her husband is permitted a visit from time to time. His resentment and momentary outbursts of fury are of no avail. She remains alone.

She takes care of her boy, earns a living by translating. She suffers loneliness; she is often fed up with her work. She occasionally meets with other lonely people: her father who comes on a one-day visit from Germany, an unemployed actor, a morose lady with whom her husband rooms. The woman's son tells her "I am sad too." Sometimes there are friendly gatherings at which all these bereft souls (including the husband) come together for a while only to return to their isolation. That is the entire action. One scene offers "relief": two children play a game in which each must stand up to being rudely treated by the other, and laugh at it. Even the Paris we see in the film is not the hurly-burly town but its empty outskirts.

The picture ends with an apothegm inscribed on the screen: "The world has a place only for those who make a place for themselves." This may be construed to mean that we must learn to bear our perpetual and indefeasible aloneness. But while this may appear metaphysically true, it is concretely false. Our solitude is due to the fact that we are all separate beings; that is the very definition of life. In the actual world we are surrounded, immersed in, bound together with all the rest, past and present. Our existence is inconceivable without the aid of, support from and, to be sure, conflict with our fellow humans and with nature itself. That is what must be accepted and, to achieve any wisdom, embraced.

The chill atmosphere of the film (which possesses its own kind of beauty) subtly proclaims "The world is too much with us." It is a sentiment we share betimes, but taken as verity it leads to sophism and falsity. Only hermits and schizophrenics can live by it. Film makers, writers and other artists—like Handke and his critical acolytes—do not. It is right and inevitable that such a world view be

SEEING IT

The boy sleeps in a corner of the back
seat,
rolled like a hedgehog. For awhile
the girl tries to read, lifting the book
to passing headlights, then gives up.
She begins to sing with her father
and they are more than twice
as loud. Neither of you, says her mother,
can carry a tune in a basket.
It's true. They shrug their shoulders
and go on. They are almost in sight
of the steel mill and its slag heap.
A small train, like those in mines,
brings "what is struck away"
to the flat-topped low hill. It circles,
and at some mysterious signal a car
spills its molten load down
the invisible slope. After a pause
another car tips, then another. Seeing it
means good luck, like falling stars,
like night-blooming lilies. Seeing it
will tell them what to expect
of the rest of the night and
of the following morning.

Sharon Bryan

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expressed—Handke does it admirably in this film—but that it should be credited as the key to ultimate understanding offends me: it is a condemnation of life. □

GOIN' SOUTH

Robert Hatch

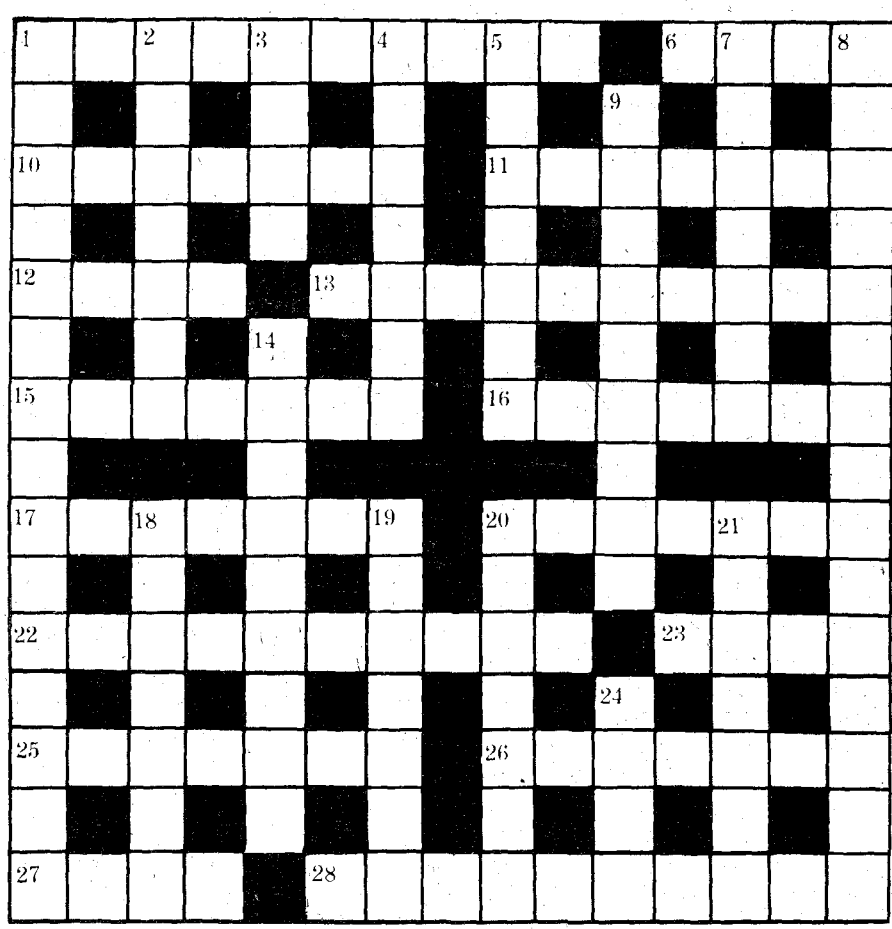
Jack Nicholson tends more to wear his roles than to inhabit them but within that limitation he is a versatile, intelligent actor whom it is normally a pleasure to watch. How does it happen, then, that Nicholson directs and stars in something called *Goin' South*, the screenplay for which was written by Messrs. Shaner, Ramrus, Shyer and Mandel, from a story by the aforesaid Shaner and Ramrus? The answer, I suspect, is that Nicholson saw it as a chance to win first prize for zaniest impersonation at some New Year's masquerade ball.

The film is set in America's beloved, if mythical, Old West, where Henry Moon (Nicholson), an outlaw, is about to be hanged for rustling cattle, robbing a bank, or some such offense. However, for the purposes of this story (though for all I know it may have been a custom of the times) he can be saved from the noose if some single lady of the community will step forward and claim him as a husband. Julia Tate (Mary Steenburgen) proceeds to do just that—not because she is taken with Moon's blatantly unhygienic appearance but because she needs a hand to help work the gold mine left her by her late papa, and now threatened by the eminent-domain rapacity of the railroad.

I will not spoil the reader's enjoyment of this drama by revealing whether or not gold is found, or describing how Henry behaves when the mine timbers buckle, or explaining how the ill-matched pair—he as lascivious as a higher ape; she so strait-laced that she hangs the chairs on the wall, in the manner of the Shaker sect—adjust their domestic relationship. Whatever its intrinsic merits, the narrative exists to give Nicholson a run for his money, and Nicholson in full flight is no jogger. He leers, slaps his thigh, mumbles his lips, cavorts, exults, sues for mercy, pleads for understanding and scratches himself with the abandon of a mime on an acid trip. An important job for any competent director is to save his more exuberant actors from making spectacles of themselves. That is an argument, among others, for keeping separate the two dramatic functions. □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1745

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 With some tobacco, the golf instructor takes over half the quota, suggesting tit for tat. (4,3,3)
6 A social rejection of certain hair-dos that are coming back? (4)
10 Understanding part of the present entertainment? (7)
11 The sun, as some say, turns blue whatever can be liquified. (7)
12 Persistently finds fault with such as Rosinante. (4)
13 See 14 down
15 What a lot of money just to obtain a bit of music! (7)
16 A famous line from R.A. (quote). (7)
17 Attributed discreditable, with change for a dime put inside. (7)
20 and 24 down Old torch song—you might make it have lemon squash! (3,3,1,4)
22 Is the tongue one? (I march on a sort of synonym.) (5,5)
23 Worry about what might be on the finger board? (4)
25 Luminous masses which could be unable to get to the point. (7)
26 Such a foot, peculiarly, has no speed. (7)
27 Irrational? After a college degree it would be ridiculous! (4)
28 The rhythm of their sounds may be sometimes interrupted. (10)

DOWN

1 You might consider it an honor, though one suggests the first lady of baseball. (5,2,8)
2 One or two possibly found in Sainte Gertrude. (7)
3 Marking the labored effort of a quiet worker. (4)
4 It's poetic to unfold a flower, yet it's done with much labor. (7)
5 Raises a strong impulse with a sudden rush. (7)
7 The sort of Roman Caesar was. (7)
8 Perhaps loaf with a date, for example, ending up in ashes or such. (Bligh went for them!) (10,5)
9 What Payne associated with palaces is certain to be in one's prayers. (9)
14 and 13 across An Englishman's advice as to when the principal should retire? (You might, if a prudent gambler.) (4,5,5,5)
18 One of the old White House crowd that got in deep? (7)
19 Pre-dawn description? (7)
20 One is certainly moving in it, though it's not always rapid. (7)
21 How to shorten a crossing. (7)
24 See 20 across

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1744

ACROSS: 1 Franc; 4 Estimated; 9 Eider duck; 11 Charivari; 12 Panic; 13 Minor scale; 17 Imminently; 21 Knife; 22 Leasehold; 23 Haifa; 24 Spectacle; 25 Winterset; 26 Lewis. DOWN: 1 and 10 French leave; 2 Andean; 3 Corbie; 4 Educationalists; 5 Take it or leave it; 6 Mile post; 7 Trainman; 8 Drenched; 14 Kickshaw; 15 Ambition; 16 Under age; 18 Vestal; 19 Moscow; 20 Adders.

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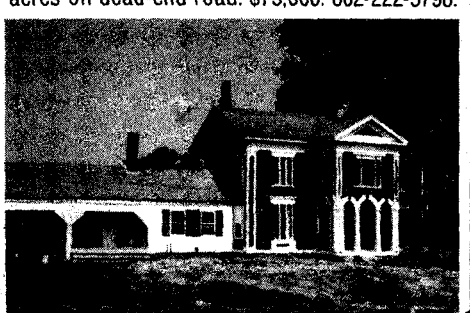

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